

King-Hinds announces intent to run as delegate

Former Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds announces her intent to run under the NMI Republican Party as the CNMI's delegate for the U.S. House of Representatives, at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe yesterday morning.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Former Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds formally
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Hafa Adai!

Kaipat denied release. PAGE 2

OAG disagrees with verdict imposed on man accused of sexually abusing minor. PAGE 4

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

\$1

Carter: CNMI is a success story

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Speaking of the progress made by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. in complying with court-mandated stipulated orders, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David O. Carter said the CNMI is a success story and the

improvements it has made have become a model to follow for other states.

Carter, who oversees the "stipulated orders" regarding the CNMI's issues with drinking water, wastewater, and oil, along with representatives

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U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David Carter, left, and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang pose for a photo.

Senate committee to probe gov't's \$77.8M arrears

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) has created a special committee to investigate the unpaid Commonwealth Utilities Corp. utility bills of the CNMI government, which has



Magofna

See SENATE on Page 4



IPI revocation hearing enters 3rd day

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The hearing whether or not to revoke the exclusive casino license of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC en-

ters its third day today, Friday, after the Commonwealth Casino Commission board failed to finish the hearing yesterday. *Saipan Tribune* learned that the hearing ended last night at 6:12pm and CCC board vice

chair Rafael S. Demapan, who is presiding over the hearing, directed that proceedings will continue today, Friday, at 9am.

The hearing will be at the Office of the Governor's conference room, but if the conference room is not available today, the hearing will be held at the Office of the Attorney General.

IPI director/Human Resources manager Howyo Chi will

See IPI on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise, who is counsel for Commonwealth Casino Commission executive director Andrew Yeom, questions Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC director/manager Howyo Chi during the continuation of the revocation hearing yesterday at the Office of the Governor's conference room on Capital Hill.

INSIDE



BUSINESS

CK Smokehouse may just have stumbled on the holy two-nity of watering holes by opening CK Chicken & Beer last December.

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NATION

President Joe Biden "continues to be fit for duty," his doctor wrote Wednesday after conducting an annual physical.

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OFFBEAT

The owners of a quirky 18th century British pub unlawfully bulldozed after a mysterious fire last year were ordered on Tuesday by a local council to rebuild it—and to stick to its original, lopsided dimensions.

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Local

Kaipat denied release

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has denied Kenneth Thomas Blas Kaipat's request for release pending appeal in a case where he had been found guilty of rape.

In their ruling, Chief Justice Alexandro Castro, Justice John A. Manglona, and Justice Perry Inos found that there is no emergency and that Kaipat's motion alleges no imminent irreparable harm if he is not released while his appeal is pending.

"The factors we must consider weigh heavily against granting release pending appeal. Kaipat has not established by clear and convincing evidence that he does not pose a danger to any other person or to the community. Because he cannot meet the first part of the first element of Supreme Court Rule 9, Kaipat does not meet his burden for release pending appeal and we do need to assess the remaining factors. The request for release pending appeal is denied," the justices said.

Last year, a jury found Kaipat guilty of three counts of sexual assault in the first degree, two counts of sexual assault in the second degree,



Castro

aggravated assault and battery, assault with a dangerous weapon, strangulation and burglary.

Kaipat was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment for three counts of sexual assault in the first degree, but 15 years suspended. Kaipat can apply for parole after serving eight years of his sentence. He was also given credit of 315 days for time served.

After serving his sentence, Kaipat will be placed on 15 years of supervised release and must pay \$41,000 in restitution. He will also register as a tier 1 sex offender.

Kaipat, through the Public Defender's Office, submitted an emergency motion requesting his release pending appeal soon after he was found guilty.

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OAG disagrees with verdict imposed on man accused of sexually abusing minor

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

A man accused of sexually abusing a minor was found not guilty by a jury of the charges filed against him. However, the Office of the Attorney General's criminal division disagrees with the decision.

Last Tuesday, the jury trial of Manuel A. Pinaula came to an end with the jury issuing a not-guilty verdict on the sexual abuse of a minor charge filed against the defendant.

In a statement from OAG Criminal Division Chief Prosecutor Chester Hinds, he disagrees with the verdict.

"We thank and appreciate the jury for their service. We understand the jury's verdict. However, the AGO does not agree. Sexual abuse of a minor is crime that 99% of the time will not have physical evidence or medical evidence or video. Until our children and victims are be-

lieved, perpetrators of these crimes will continue to get away. Regardless of the outcome, the OAG will continue to prosecute these crimes and continue fighting for the victims," he said.

The Superior Court has yet to issue a written order following the trial.

A capella group DYNMX to hold concert

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
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CORRESPONDENT

It's going to be a night of music and memories as the 11-member a capella group DYNMX prepares to hold their "Echo of Time" concert this Saturday at the Marianas High School's new cafeteria in Susupe.

DYNMX's Brett Espineda said the concert will begin at 6:30pm that night, and, in addition to a carefully curated set of a capella music, there will also be special performances

by singers from Marianas Got Talent Season 1, MHS' Rhythm n' Harmony, and dance group Profound Bandits.

Espineda shared that the concert, as the name implies, is intended to give the audience a taste of the past.

"... it's inspired by our past experiences for all of our members. ...All of us are GLEE alumni, MHS GLEE Club alumni. So we decided last year in August that we wanted to get together to perform one last time at Tumon Bay Music Festival," he said.

The concert will raise funds that will go toward their goal to represent and compete in the Tumon Bay Music Festival in Guam on March 7.

"Of course ...we need money, so we decided to create this fundraiser concert. And not only to raise money but also to get that thrill of performing again, because all of us have been busy with many things in life, with our careers...and college," he added. "So we wanted to create this concert more for nostalgia...and it is meant to bring nostalgia to

parents, children and teenagers who are now grown up and community members that supported us since we were part of MHS GLEE."

Espineda is inviting all music lovers and community members alike to attend the concert as they look back at the birthplace of their passion for a capella and where they started their friendships.

Tickets are currently on sale for \$5 per student and \$10 per adult, and can be bought online at <https://forms.gle/Sm86c1Ep8Qg7NkDu5>. There will also be tickets sold at the door on the day of the event.

CARTER

From page 1

from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Justice, are visiting Saipan for the week. Part of their visit was to join the ribbon-cutting ceremony unveiling the Sadog Tasi Wastewater Treatment plant's new clarifier.

Carter said the CNMI is doing an incredible job in terms of complying with the mandates of Stipulated Order 1 and 2, whose actions in the past few years could be used as a model for other states on "what can be done."

"My compliments to CUC, [the] CNMI, DOJ, [and] EPA. It's a good success story. Power plants 1 and 2 [and] Pow-

er Plant 4 are operating well, good integrity, backup systems, pipeline is underground now in case a typhoon hits. So, we're pretty well protected here with redundancy, complementary of all involved in the process," he said.

Carter also said the CNMI continues to make progress in terms of its water service, but improvements can still be made.

"With water, we're making a lot of progress. When we first came here, a lot of folks on the island had two to four hours of running water due to bursting pipes, no regulations, water meters that were breaking. Now, we've got 24/7 water, we've got chlorine to keep the water clean, wastewater plants are operating now with a new clarifier

with the output of fluids being a model for the United States. We're making tremendous progress, but we've got more to do. We want to keep the island healthy, the folks healthy, protect our workers, and get more tourists to come to this incredibly beautiful place with incredibly lovely people. Let's keep building. We've got good infrastructure started, but we shouldn't rest on that. We need to keep improving and keep up with the standards and there's still a lot of work to do," he said.

So far, Carter said, the CNMI is in compliance and has completed what needed to be done under SO2.

"We're now in a situation where we've completed SO2. Think of SO2 broadly as your oil and your tanks. When we

first came here, the CNMI had one operating tank. There was another tank, Tank 104, that was causing leakage toward the ocean so we put in a berm of 15 feet down and about 500 feet wide to contain the leak to reduce contamination. We don't have any contamination now. Most importantly, we've torn down Tank 104 completely, we've torn down Tank 101, and you've got Tank 102 and 103, so for the first time the CNMI has redundancy here, meaning in case one tank goes down, we could use another tank. ... Even if one tank goes down, you have another so there's no power shortage," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

IPI

From page 1

continue his testimony today.

When *Saipan Tribune* left the hearing late afternoon yesterday, IPI counsel Michael Chen was still examining Chi.

Chi said he started working at IPI in July 2017. In June 2020, he became the assistant vice president for property management.

In response to questions by assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise, who is the counsel for CCC executive director Andrew Yeom, Chi acknowledged that IPI is required to comply with casino regulation and CCC orders, but when presented with CCC's order

2020-03 (which requires IPI to maintain a payroll reserved in a bank for its employees), Chi said he was not aware of the timeframe when IPI was in trouble paying its employees on time and that he does not have personal knowledge that Yeom ever filed an enforcement action against IPI for its failure to comply with the CCC order 2020-03.

Chi said he is also not aware if there was ever a hearing regarding IPI's failure to comply with CCC order 2020-03.

When Blaise's examination turned to Yeom's second complaint, 2021-002, Chi said he does not have a personal knowledge whether IPI maintained a payroll reserve required by the CCC order

2020-03 since he was not in charge of finance at the time.

He said his position has evolved since he joined IPI, having started in HR, then in property management in June 2020, and started having more responsibilities, particularly when COVID-19 hit.

Chi said he was not aware that the CCC issued order 2021-002 to suspend IPI's casino license for failing to comply with CCC order 2020-003.

Chi said he does not know if after April 22, 2021, IPI did create a payroll reserve for its employees consistent with CCC order 2020-03.

He said since he has taken over, they have been paying their employees on time and they haven't had

any payroll issues.

Chi said IPI has enough funding to pay its employees. He said ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, they have laid off many staff and their payroll has been reduced drastically.

Chi said he believes \$4.2 million is unreasonable to maintain for just 12 employees.

"I believe IPI has money. Whenever we requested money, IPI submits money, IPI Holdings submits money, the investor submits money to pay for the obligations that are required," he said.

Chi said there is no reason for him to believe that they don't have \$4.2 million in the reserve account, which is why he has not notified the commissioner of insufficient capital.

SENATE

From page 1

now ballooned to a whopping \$77.8 million.

In a memorandum she issued Tuesday, DeLeon Guerrero underscored the need to investigate the government's unpaid power bill in a bid to find ways on how to settle these outstanding arrears.

The unpaid \$77.8 million—incurred by all of the CNMI government's departments, branches, political subdivisions, and public corporations—was the highlight of a recent CUC report.

DeLeon Guerrero appointed Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) to serve as chairperson of the Special Committee on the CNMI Government's Unpaid CUC Bills, with Sen. Dennis C. Mendiola (R-Rota) as vice chair, and Sen. Karl King-Nabors (R-Tinian) as a member.

DELEGATE

From page 1

announced yesterday her decision to run for office under the NMI Republican Party as the CNMI's delegate for the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I stand before you today, ready for this fight, ready to serve you, and ready to work for the opportunities, rights, freedom, and possibilities of our people," said King-Hinds, drawing applause from family members, friends, supporters, and community leaders and members who attended the event at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe.

It was her mother, Serafina King-Nabors, who introduced King-Hinds at the event. Both King-Nabors and the late Felicidad T. Ogumoro were the first women representatives in the first CNMI Legislature.

NMI Republican Party chair Diego Benavente, who was present at the announcement, said in an interview he also expects to receive John Oliver Gonzales' letter of intent to run as delegate, and that another individual has also expressed an interest to seek the position.

Benavente said they set a deadline of March 15, 2024, to file a letter of intent.

By March 15, if there is more one candidate for the position, then they will go into a primary, Benavente said.

In her speech, King-Hinds said she is a wife and a mother who, like many people in the CNMI, share in the burning desire to give their children the opportunity for a better life and to live in a safer world.

King-Hinds said she is a lawyer who, like many young

DeLeon Guerrero appointed Senate fiscal analyst David Demapan, the Senate legal counsel, and a Senate legislative assistant to assist the ad-hoc committee.

She directed it to report back to her within 60 days.

This came about after acting CUC executive director Betty G. Terlaje provided DeLeon Guerrero with reports of its accounts receivables as of Jan. 31, 2024. Terlaje submitted the report in response to DeLeon Guerrero's request last Tuesday for information regarding CUC accounts receivables.

According to CUC's Aging Receivable Accounts, the CNMI central government has a balance of \$13 million; the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., \$60.5 million; Public School System, \$224,647; Commonwealth Ports Authority, \$2.5 million; and other agencies, \$1.5 million, for a total of \$77,889,279.

» The Republican Party will possibly hold a primary as John Oliver Gonzales will also be submitting his intent to run, while another individual is also interested in the position

people in the CNMI, sought education, experience, and knowledge so that she can do her part to help build a better community.

Through this all, she said, she has seen the strength of the CNMI community.

King-Hinds said it was here that people secured their place in the American community, fought for rights to self-government, stood firm against both internal and external threats like natural disasters, pandemics, and uneven and damaging federal policies, and stand ready to fight for a place in this world.

She recognized that to run for delegate is not easy. "I already hear it. 'She's from Tinian.' 'She's never served in the Legislature.' I get that," King-Hinds said.

Yet King-Hinds assured that she is ready for that hard work. In fact, she said, nothing in her life has been easy as she has had to cross picket lines and endure harassment to work as a checker at Safeway so she can put food on the table.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

CHCC notes rise in norovirus cases in CNMI

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has identified an increase in norovirus activity recently and is advising residents in the CNMI to take precautions to stay healthy.

Many viruses, including norovirus, can cause vomiting and diarrhea. People of all ages can get infected and sick with norovirus, which spreads very easily and quickly. These viruses are easily spread through

food, by person-to-person contact or through contaminated surfaces. Therefore, take caution if someone in your household is ill.

Norovirus infection is sometimes called the "stomach flu" or "stomach bug" but it is not related to influenza (flu), a respiratory viral illness that can cause fever, cough, chills, headache, muscle aches, runny nose and sore throat.

You can get norovirus by accidentally getting tiny particles of feces (poop) or vomit in your mouth from an infected person. Norovirus can cause diarrhea, vomiting, nausea and stomach pain. Symptoms usually last one to three days, with most individuals recovering without medical attention. However, norovirus infection can result in

hospitalization due to dehydration, especially in young children and the elderly.

Protect yourself and others:

■ **Wash hands:** Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after using the toilet or changing diaper, and before eating, preparing and handling food;

■ **Safe food handling:** Handle and prepare food safely: rinse fruits and vegetables before consumption, cook shellfish thoroughly, routinely clean and sanitize kitchen utensils, counters and surfaces;

■ **Disinfect** surfaces:

Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, light switches, phones, keyboards and countertops. Norovirus can remain on surfaces for extended periods of time.

■ **Isolate infected individuals:** Stay home when sick and for 48 hours after symptoms stop. Avoid preparing food for others when sick and 48 hours after symptoms stop.

If someone catches norovirus, there is not a specific medicine to cure it. However, there are practical steps to ease symptoms and promote recovery:

■ **Stay hydrated:** It's cru-

cial to drink plenty of fluids like water, electrolyte solutions, and clear broths to prevent dehydration caused by vomiting and diarrhea.

■ **Rest:** Give your body the time it needs to recover by getting enough rest and sleep.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

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Military training on Tinian, open ocean March 4-10

CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, in conjunction with U.S. Naval Forces Marianas Guam, would like to inform the general public that the military will be conducting military training on Tinian, and in the open ocean. The dates and times are as follows:

■ March 4-10, 12am-11:59pm, Tinian and open ocean military training

Training will take place on and in the vicinity of Tinian Exclusive Military Area and in the open ocean.

Marine vessels are advised to monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast Notice to Mariners for advisories and remain clear of the areas for the duration of the events.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is advising residents in the areas surrounding the training exercises to not be alarmed

if they hear or see increased training activity.

The cooperation and understanding of the general public is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the CNMI EOC STATE Warning point at telephone number (670) 237-8000, VHF Marine Channel-16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0 for this advisory. (PR)

SSHS PT&SA general meeting on March 7

Saipan Southern High School's Parent, Teacher, & Student Association will have a general meeting on March 7 from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at the SSHA Manta cafeteria.

There will be a special presentation by the CHCC Health Promotion Team and light re-

freshments will be served.

Those who can't make the in-person meeting can take part online via [HTTPS://meet.google.com/WXJ-AQZE-JMU](https://meet.google.com/WXJ-AQZE-JMU).

For more information, contact (670) 237-3710 or email sshspta670@gmail.com. (PR)



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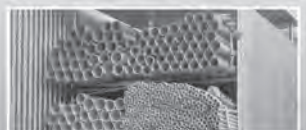


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HMS holds Career Day for students

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hopwood Middle School students got a taste of the real world after their school-wide Career Day last Tuesday, with over 20 government agencies, businesses and individuals showcasing their careers to the school's 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

The Career Day, held as part of the celebration of the CNMI Public School System's Career & Technical Education Month, gave the students an

opportunity to listen to experts from different fields as they shared their professional journeys and work experience.

Former representative Sheila Babauta, who spoke to an 8th grade English Language Arts class, said exposing the youth to careers while still at an impressionable age is important.

"I think the more options that they can see around them of what's possible, the more they'll be empowered. At the end of the day, it all comes down to them being empow-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A student tries Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting's equipment during Hopwood Middle School's Career Day last Tuesday.



LEIGH GASES

Former representative Sheila Babauta presents to an 8th grade ELA class during Hopwood Middle School's Career Day last Tuesday.

ered," she said. "I'm so happy and so proud that Hopwood is hosting a Career Day and I hope to see it more consistently in all of our schools."

Babauta shared her story on community advocacy and being in public office. "I shared with them what I do today, which is focused on community engagement. And as a business owner, I'm an advisor and I connect federal agencies or national non-profit organizations—or people, researchers, and universities, to our community when they visit," she said.

An 8th grade student, Leelando Backman, said of the

Career Day event, "It's pretty cool to see all the opportunities presented that we can have in the future. Around this age in adolescence, we're trying to figure out what we want to do, so it's good to have these examples of job opportunities."

Didiich Tudela, 8th grade ELA teacher, said hosting this event is a great way for students to learn what they like, dislike, and learn more about themselves. "They're still trying to find their identity and another way is to explore and do different things to see if that's something they like or not," she said.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

ONE (1) ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:

Compute, classify, and record numerical data to keep financial records complete. Perform any combination of routine calculating, posting, and verifying duties to obtain primary financial data for use in maintaining accounting records. May also check the accuracy of figures, calculations, and postings pertaining to business transactions recorded by other workers. Operate computers programmed with accounting software to record, store, and analyze information. Check figures, postings, and documents for correct entry, mathematical accuracy, and proper codes. Comply with federal, state, and company policies, procedures, and regulations. Operate 10-key calculators, typewriters, and copy machines to perform calculations and produce documents. Receive, record, and bank cash, checks, and vouchers. Code documents according to company procedures. Perform financial calculations, such as amounts due, interest charges, balances, discounts, equity, and principal. Reconcile or note and report discrepancies found in records. Perform general office duties, such as filing, answering telephones, and handling routine correspondence. Access computerized financial information to answer general questions as well as those related to specific accounts.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- Associates Degree in Accounting, foreign equivalence is acceptable;
- At least 36 months experience in bookkeeping, accounting or auditing clerk; &
- Must be knowledgeable/experienced with operating PC, adding machine, electric typewriter, accounting software such as SAGE MAS 90 or SAGE BusinessWorks 2019 and Microsoft Office Suite.

Working Conditions: Full-time (40 hours per week).

Location: Pacific Amusement, Inc. Bldg., No. 6943, Chalan Pali Arnold, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested individuals please send your resume with a list of references, photocopy of a valid photo identification card & updated police clearance to:

James Brian Gebhard, General Manager
Pacific Amusement, Inc.
P.O. Box 504419
Building No. 6943, Chalan Pali Arnold
Saipan, MP 96950
Contact no. 670-233-4397
E-mail: jim@pacificamusement.com

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

ONE (1) AUTOMOTIVE PARTS SPECIALIST

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:

Must be knowledgeable on the functions of automotive, heavy equipment & power generator parts and know the basic functions of various tools & equipment related to the industry; Provide auto parts answers and solutions for retail and wholesale customers in person or over the phone; Use parts knowledge to assist other NAPA team members answer questions for customers; Analyze customer operations to ascertain future parts, service, automotive and truck requirements; Develop and achieve maximum sales volume consistent with sales projections on parts and labor sales; Advise or assist customers in such areas as inventory selection and control, service available, new products and services, etc.; Take orders, introduces new products and promotions, reemphasize existing products and service and provide necessary instructions as needed; Maintain weekly customer call sheets, stating summary of calls made; Determine sizes with precision measuring tools and knowledge in Total Automated Management System (TAMS); Read catalogs to determine descriptions of malfunctions; May be required to check or look over machine, product, or car to determine what part is needed; May be required to handle/dispose/confine/transport used engine oil or other hazardous waste from truck, automobile or power generator engine in compliance with OSHA and EPA; Recommend substitute parts or show customers how to modify parts; Look up stock numbers and prices for parts in catalogs or computers; Perform other related duties as assigned.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- High School Diploma/GED or Graduation from Trade or Vocational School (emphasis in auto mechanic) foreign equivalence is acceptable;
- 24 months experience in auto mechanic, auto repair shop or similar field;
- Certification from EPA and/or OSHA on Hazardous Materials Safety Awareness required.

Working Conditions: Full-time (40 hours per week).

Location: Bisnes Mami (Saipan), Inc. dba NAPA Auto and Truck Parts, Chalan Monsignor Guerrero Rd., San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested individuals please send your resume with a list of references, photocopy of a valid photo identification card & updated police clearance to:

Satya Venkata Vallabhaneni, General Manager
Bisnes Mami (Saipan), Inc. dba NAPA Auto and Truck Parts
P.O. Box 504640
Chalan Monsignor Guerrero Rd., San Jose
Saipan, MP 96950
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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
4 Year-Territorial Transportation Improvement Plan

NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW

AMENDMENT to the CNMI TTIP FY'23-26

Please visit dpw.gov.mp or transit.cnmi.gov
to view Amendment 1 to the plan.

For more information or to submit
comments, email Lorraine Villagomez at
lvillagomez.highway@dpw.gov.mp or Lauren
Terlaje at lterlaje.highway@dpw.gov.mp for
FHWA funded projects or call (670) 234-9828.
For COTA's FTA Funded Projects, call (670)
664-2682 or email Alfreda Camacho Maratita
at alfredac.maratita@gov.mp.

COMMENT PERIOD:
FEBRUARY 23-MARCH 22, 2024

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE GUARDIANSHIP OF: } FCD-GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-0031

Lauren Minyoung Bang } NOTICE OF HEARING

An Incompetent Person }

By: }

Wonsuk Bang and Eunho An }

Petitioner(s) }

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Appointment of Guardian for the above-named by Wonsuk Bang and Eunho An, Petitioner(s), was filed with the above-entitled Honorable Court and is open for review at the Office of the Clerk of Court in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A HEARING of said Petition for Guardianship will be held at the above-entitled Honorable Court at the CNMI Judiciary before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio on the 15th day of April, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A or as soon as thereafter.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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UNITED STATES
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its 4th Quarter General Membership Meeting on March 5, 2024 from 9:30am to 12:30pm at Saipan World Resort – Sunflower Room



AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Review & Adoption of the Agenda of March 5, 2024

IV. Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2023

V. Action Items

a. Review & Approve the DD Basic Grant Partial Award Budget

b. Review & Approve the CNMI Assistive Technology Grant Partial Award Budget

VI. Reports

a. Chairperson

b. State Plan Committee Chairperson

c. Fiscal Committee Chairperson

d. Executive Director

VII. Old Business

a. Family Transition Symposium Update

b. Fundamentals of Caregiving Training Update

c. American Sign Language Training Update

d. March 2024 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Update

VIII. New Business

a. AS UCEDD Technical Assistance – February 22, 2024

IX. Miscellaneous


X. Next Meeting

XI. Adjournment

Note: Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes of oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/s/ Concepcion Ulloa
Chairperson

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award total \$274,744 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



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COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-24-020

SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF LUBE OILS FOR POWER GENERATION (CUC SAIPAN, TINIAN, ROTA)

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the supply and delivery of engine lubricating oils for CUC Power Generation facilities on Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

The IFB Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set. The IFB package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-service will be provided via email to the registered email ID. Prospective bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies, in a sealed envelope marked “CUC-IFB-24-020, Supply & Delivery of Lube Oils for Power Generation” to the **CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building**, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 11, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. An electronic copy should also be emailed to Marcela Tenorio via email, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

All Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility for any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements during the Contractor’s preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, pay any cost incurred in preparing the bid under this request, procure or contract for services. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contract may be subject to the approval of CPUC and will not be effective until receipt of such approval.


All responses to this IFB should consider all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the proponent’s obligation upon award of a contract. Successful proponents must submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor’s Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 5, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org, and Marcela Tenorio, email address marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.


CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLÁN, JR.
Purchasing Administrator



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-24-013

PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW GENSET UNITS FOR SAIPAN, POWER PLANT NO.4

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Contractors or Vendors for the purchase and installation of new gensets for Power Plant No.4 located on the island of Saipan. The purchase and installation of the new gensets with approximately 6MW of total new output will improve CUC current power generation capacity needed to sustain critical electrical services to the community of Saipan.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration with CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RFP package will be emailed to the registered email ID. Prospective Proposers for this RFP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division by March 8, 2024 to be considered.

A Pre-proposal Conference followed by site visits will be held on **February 22, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “**CUC-RFP-24-013, Purchase and Installation of New Genset Units for Saipan Power Plant No.4**” to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 A.M.(ChST) on March 19, 2024**. Proposals mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes which will become the obligation of the proposer awarded a contract.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 27, 2024**, to Manny Sablan, CUC’s Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC’s Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC’s Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLÁN
Purchasing Administrator

Municipal council honors late founder of Japan-Saipan exchange program

The 17th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council is leading the effort to honor Yasuo "Zorro" Miyazawa, who founded the Japan-Saipan Bridge of Peace and Goodwill and Participate & Learn Program and was named by the council as the Saipan-Japan Goodwill Ambassador for Peace.

A ceremonial tribute and remembrance of Miyazawa's four-decade journey in cross-cultural experiences will take place on Saipan this week, with the participation of Seisa Gakuen High School principal Hajime Kaneko, Seisa Study Abroad Program director Kuniko, and Marianas High School principal Jonathan Aguon and vice principal Romolo Orsini. MHS is Seisa Gakuen's sister school in the Marianas.

The Saipan council first bestowed on Miyazawa the honorary title of Saipan-Japan Goodwill Ambassador for Peace in 2014, a title he carried until his passing.

His Bridge program is a study abroad platform for high school students from Japan to Saipan and students from Saipan to Japan in cross-cultural learning experiences for nearly four decades that Miyazawa founded in 1984.

In one of Miyazawa's pub-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The late Yasuo "Zorro" Miyazawa.

lished writings, *School to Turn Your Life Around*, he asserts, "It is difficult to prove what cannot be done. [For] when you examine it thoroughly, you will find that it can be done and that nothing is 100% impossible. The gap between 'I want to' and 'I can' is bigger than the Mariana Trench. If you decide that you can do it, you will have the strength to overcome the obstacles."

According to a municipal council news release, Miyazawa's philosophy of learning was underpinned by the cultural traditions of Japan's Kyosei and Saipan's Inafa'maolek, a simple principle that espouses to "understand each other, leave nobody out, and make friends"—ast uttered by Miyazawa on

March 23, 2022, a day following his last celebration of Seisa's 50th anniversary in Japan.

Today, over 8,000 Bridge alumni living on Saipan and Japan have participated in this legacy program—a program that has become an iconic event widely anticipated each year by Seisa students coming to Saipan, as well as students from MHS meeting their Japanese brothers and sisters and Saipan students always looking forward to the ski trips and other learning opportunities through Seisa's "Participate and Learn Program" in Japan each year.

"Indeed, the Bridge program is one of humanity's living treasure that has been passionately driven by a simple man, who 40 years ago today, still dedicates himself to mankind's universal values of peace, goodwill, and

charity—values that inspire our forefathers yesterday, the same values that inspire us today, and I am positive core values that will forever be refreshingly enshrined and memorialized in a beautiful musical lyric by the late pop artist Michael Jackson in his musical rendition 'We are the world,'" reads a message delivered during Seisa's 50th anniversary in Tokyo.

The council's memorial tribute reads: "Miyazawa inspired many to believe and work for lasting peace and friendship between Japan and Saipan, a vision of a man who see the very ocean that sometimes appears to separate us as a bridge that connects all of us, here and now—as one people in peace, friendship, and goodwill journey in human relationships that transcend and traverse today's generation, a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Yasuo "Zorro" Miyazawa founded the Japan-Saipan Bridge of Peace and Goodwill and Participate & Learn Program in 1984.

journey that shall continue for generations more tomorrow, in a relationship of peace, friendship and charity..."

The municipal tribute concluded, "May peace, friendship, and charity reign within us and through us all and unto others. And may the iconic Ja-

pan-Saipan Bridge of Peace, Friendship and Goodwill program at Marianas High School and Seisa High School, a program that has extended to San Antonio School, bring lasting success, prosperity, and friendship to us all for all times in Zorro's memory." (PR)



PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division will start the CNMI 2024 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey beginning on March 01, 2024 and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All businesses and employers (Private & Public), with and with no employees, are urged to complete this survey before March 15, 2024.

Data Collection Portal Link: <http://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/dev1/>

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Saipan's 1st ever 30 kinds of Sushi Brunch!

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 **PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN**



The Picture may differ from the actual.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Biden doesn't need to weaken EV rules to get reelected

It's profoundly disturbing that the Biden administration is planning to relax one of the biggest climate actions it has proposed—tough auto emissions standards designed to rapidly increase sales of electric vehicles—in an apparent election-year concession to automakers and organized labor. Transportation is the nation's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and these standards are among the most powerful tools the United States has to slash pollution fast enough to meet its climate change goals.

President Biden is mistaken if he thinks weakening environmental protections will help get him reelected. Advancing tough standards that position the country for a healthier and more globally competitive future should be considered an asset to his campaign, not a liability.

The rules were proposed last year by the Environmental Protection Agency to ramp up sales of new zero-emission cars and light-duty trucks from about 7% of vehicles sold today to more than 67% by 2032. But multiple news outlets reported last week that the Biden administration may allow automakers to move more gradually toward that goal until after 2030 when it issues the final rules as soon as next month.

This would be an undeserved gift to auto manufacturers that have continually sought delays in environmental standards in order to keep selling as many highly profitable, gas-guzzling SUVs as possible, even while publicizing their own ambitious plans to transition to zero-emission vehicles. It may also be a concession to the powerful United Auto Workers union, which cited concerns about the transition to electric vehicles as one reason for withholding its endorsement of Biden until late last month. Organized labor is important to Biden's reelection strategy in key swing states, including Michigan, where autoworkers worry that switching to electric vehicles will reduce the workforce or move jobs to nonunion plants with lower wages.

But the administration should understand that supporting good-paying auto industry jobs and upholding high environmental standards are not mutually exclusive. Slowing down the nation's adoption of electric vehicles moves in the wrong direction as the effects of climate change are accelerating. Earth had its hottest year on record in 2023 and weather has become more unpredictable and deadly.

The administration says it "is confident" the U.S. will achieve its goal of 50% zero-emission new car sales by 2030, and it seems to be arguing that the pace of the transition to electric vehicles is not as important as the end goal. But speed matters a lot when it comes to reducing air pollution and fighting climate change—especially after decades when world leaders did nothing.

Each year that we delay phasing out fossil fuel vehicles is another year we're failing the most vulnerable populations, including low-income people and communities of color hardest hit by the effects of air pollution, and future generations that will have to deal with the consequences of a warming planet. It's also another year that the U.S. risks falling further behind competing economies, such as China, that are embracing electric cars and

See BIDEN on Page 11



'Work longer' is no solution for people who can't afford to retire

In April 2023, Betty Glover, a 91-year-old grocery store clerk in Oregon, was finally able to retire after a GoFundMe campaign raised \$82,000 for her. After seven decades in the workforce, Glover couldn't save enough to retire and cover basic expenses such as for food and medicine.

"I hate the thought of not working," Glover told a local TV station. But she wanted to spend time with her two children, four grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

Glover's was not the only GoFundMe retirement. Earlier that year, 82-year-old Walmart cashier Butch Marion retired, thanks to a GoFundMe campaign.

These outpourings of generosity are not feel-good stories; they reveal America's severely broken national retirement system. Welcome to retirement American style, where retirement is work.

Most Americans do not have enough money to retire on. Forty-four percent of households with members ages 55-64 have no savings at all. The median retirement account balance is about \$100,000; most middle-class people need \$600,000. No wonder there are about 39 million workers 55 and older in the U.S. Workers 75 and older are the fastest-growing age segment of the workforce.

While some older workers are making good money, feathering their retirement nests and enjoying comfortable jobs—senators, corporate executives, lawyers—millions are stuck in low-paying, physically demanding and dangerous jobs at which they have little if any voice or power.

Older workers are closing the earnings gap with their younger counterparts, not because employers suddenly prize age and experience more than they did in the 1980s, but because older workers are ramping up their hours to meet financial needs, as highlighted by Pew Research.

When retirement security declines, so does older workers' bargaining position to demand good wages and conditions. Employers know that more older people must keep working, even with less favorable wages, hours and conditions. My research shows that at least two-thirds of workers 62 and older are working because they don't have enough money to retire.

Workers over age 55 are disproportionately represented in jobs that are lower-paid and physically demanding: 31% of home health and personal-care workers and 34% of janitors are over 55, while older workers make up 23% of the overall workforce.

This grim picture is on track to get worse. Most of the fastest-growing jobs in the U.S. economy, such as in health care and software engineering, are unlikely to benefit older workers. (The software sector has a median age of 38, while the wider work-

By TERESA GHILARDUCCI

Los Angeles Times

Teresa Ghilarducci, a professor of economics at the New School for Social Research, is the author of the forthcoming *Work, Retire, Repeat: The Uncertainty of Retirement in the New Economy*.



force median age is 42.) Many of the jobs in health care are low-paid, physically taxing work that may not be a good fit for most people in their 60s or 70s.

Paradoxically, even as many older folks need to keep working to make ends meet, most people 62-70 are not able to work for a host of reasons and will retire with inadequate incomes or savings.

As the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis reported in 2019: "Between the years 2010 to 2018, 55.3 percent of workers aged 55 and up in the bottom half of the income distribution were forced to leave the workforce because of layoffs, plant closings, age discrimination, poor health, and family concerns."

And yet, the "work longer" mantra persists; the Economist magazine featured a headline last month that trumpeted: "Why you should never retire." That may have benefits for the economy when the labor market is tight, but the nation should not depend on people working longer to make up for inadequate retirement-income security. This only exacerbates inequalities in wealth, health, well-being and retirement time.

Working until you drop is not a civilized plan for a civilized society. We desperately need a Gray New Deal that improves jobs for older workers while also restoring and boosting pensions and retirement security. Federal and state incentives should promote better-paying and age-appropriate work. Improved job training and stronger unions would also make a difference.

An Older Workers' Bureau at the Department of Labor could help steer and support such efforts. Strengthening pensions would help ensure that older workers get better wages and conditions and are working by choice rather than necessity. We need subsidized guaranteed retirement accounts and advance-funded pensions, and an expanded Social Security system.

Some may fret about the price tag of a different approach, but the status quo is unacceptable and unsustainable in both human and economic terms. A Gray New Deal would save money and save lives.

Working until you drop is not a civilized plan for a civilized society.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Ukraine's battles drag on, at home and in Washington

Two years after Vladimir Putin sought to wipe it off the European map, Ukraine still stands. But its future remains in doubt.

The resistance of House Republicans has stalled the provision of more vital U.S. aid. And the past few months have not been kind to Ukrainian troops on the country's hundreds of miles of battlefields.

That the embattled country still stands is a surprise to both sides—an unpleasant one to Putin, who was confident his mighty legions could score a quick success, and a pleasant one to the West, which feared he was right.

That it still stands is primarily a tribute to the brave Ukrainians who have fought fiercely to protect their homeland and to their charismatic president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He first showed his character in rejecting Donald Trump's blackmail and became a global democratic hero by mobilizing support for his country, at home and abroad.

But its survival is also a tribute to the leaders of the West, to President Joe Biden and those who followed his lead and rallied to support their neighbor, lest Putin next target one of their fellow NATO members.

Among them:

■ The leaders of Sweden and Finland, who have forsaken decades of neutrality to align themselves with the forces of democracy by finally deciding to join NATO.

■ Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany, who embraced the effort after years of trying to balance economic relations with Russia and political ties to NATO and the United States.

■ And many less known figures, like Prime Minister Kaja Kallas of little Estonia, potentially a prime target if Putin succeeds in Ukraine. According to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Estonian aid to Ukraine totals 3.8% of its gross domestic product—the most of any nation and 10 times that of the United States.

These leaders have not wavered in supporting Ukraine. But Biden acknowledged recently there may be limits to what he can persuade the American Congress to do.

Initially, the president's mantra was that the United States would stand with Ukraine "as long as it takes." But in December, formally unveiling his administration's latest aid package, he said the United States would stand with the embattled country "as long as we can."

That reflected the difficulty Biden has encountered in recent months from the chaotically Republican-led House of Representatives in providing additional aid. First announced last October, a revised version of Biden's proposal finally passed the Senate on Feb. 13.

But it remains stalemated after five months in the House, where new Speaker Mike Johnson continues to waffle on whether and how he will put the proposal before the full membership.

Meanwhile, pro-Ukraine members from both parties—believing they have the support of a bipartisan majority of the full House—are plotting parliamentary maneuvers to get around the speaker. But the outcome remains uncertain.

The resulting impasse has prompted apocalyptic warnings from Zelenskyy and other Western leaders of the dire impact on Ukraine of an American failure to maintain the flow of needed assistance.

"If there's anyone inspired by unresolved issues on Capitol Hill, it's just Putin and his sick clique," the Ukrainian president said during a Washington visit last December.

"Will Ukrainians survive without Congress' support?" he asked during an interview last week with Fox News' Bret Baier. "Of course, but not all of us."

Underlying this struggle is the potential impact of next November's American presidential election. Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, has made it clear he is no fan of U.S. support for Ukraine—or NATO. He has predicted that, if elected, he and Putin could settle the matter in 24 hours.

Trump's attitude is a key factor behind the House GOP leadership's refusal to even grant a vote on the proposal. During the recent Senate debate, Ohio Republican Sen. J.D. Vance, a key Trump supporter, warned that the aid package "represents an attempt by the foreign policy blob/deep state to stop President Trump from

By **CARL P. LEUBSDORF**

The Dallas Morning News

Carl P. Leubsdorf is the former Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. Readers may write to him via email at carl.p.leubsdorf@gmail.com.



pursuing his desired policy, and, if he does so anyways, to provide grounds to impeach him and undermine his administration."

House Republicans are not the only ones whose plans are being affected by the possibility that Trump will regain the presidency in November. Analysts see no reason for Putin to consider any settlement now if the American elections will, in effect, deliver Ukraine to him.

At the same time, military analysts believe the tides of war have shifted somewhat to the Russians because of Ukraine's failed counteroffensive last summer and the fact it could be running short of troops, weapons and bullets.

Reflecting the drive that has put the Ukrainians back on the defensive, Russian forces recently re-occupied Avdiivka, a key crossroads in eastern Ukraine—its biggest military success in a year. Western efforts to cripple Russia's economy with waves of sanctions have been largely unsuccessful.

Some weeks ago, there were reports of private talk among Ukraine's allies—including the United States—of the need to prepare for ultimately reaching a compromise settlement. But Zelenskyy has been no more willing to do so than Putin, still talking unconvincedly of regaining all land lost to the Russians.

So, after two years, the bloody war goes on, a success in terms of Ukraine's original outlook, but with no certainty of achieving a permanent one.

Our sons' agony taught us the importance of medical aid in dying

By **NILSA CENTENO** and **SUZY FLACK**

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

We are two moms whose only sons, Miguel Carrasquillo and Andrew Flack, lived in Illinois and died young from cancer. Our boys, both in their 30s, made emotional videos pleading to die peacefully from aggressive cancers.

As similar as our two stories are, our sons experienced very different deaths.

One suffered horribly before his death from brain cancer because Illinois did not have the option of medical aid in dying to end his intolerable suffering. The other died gently in California, surrounded by loved ones, because he was able to choose medical aid in dying in that state—again, an end-of-life care option unavailable in Illinois.

Despite the painful memories, we are carrying on our sons' legacies by urging Illinois lawmakers to pass the recently introduced Illinois End-of-Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act. The bill would allow mentally capable, terminally ill adults in Illinois with six months or less to live the option to obtain prescription medication they can decide to take for a peaceful death.

In 2012, at age 31, Miguelito was realizing his dream as a chef at Petterino's restaurant in Chicago when doctors diagnosed that he had an aggressive brain tumor. Despite Miguel bravely enduring excruciatingly painful treatments, the cancer spread throughout his body. Miguel moved from Chicago back to his family's home in Puerto Rico. During his last weeks of life, Miguel recorded videos in English and Spanish to urge fellow Latinos to support medical aid-in-dying legislation nationwide.

As a special education teacher in San Diego, Andrew, known as Drew, spent his last months of life advocating for medical aid in dying in his home state of Illinois through his blog and

podcast. In August 2017, Drew underwent some tests because he was not feeling well. I, his mother, dropped to the floor devastated when Drew called to say it was cancer. For two years, Drew underwent radiation, chemotherapy and surgery, but the painful treatments failed to cure the cancer. In December 2020, doctors told Drew his cancer was terminal, and he decided to stay in California because he wanted to access the state's End of Life Option Act that allows medical aid in dying.

Different deaths

On Nov. 16, 2022, Drew was in his bedroom with its stunning view of the setting sun, with Jaxson, his roommate's dog. Everyone commented on the beauty of the skyline, sharing funny stories from Drew's childhood, and Drew got everyone laughing in turn.

Two hospice nurses mixed the medication with juice and they gave Drew a spoonful of raspberry sorbet to take it with. Within two hours, he fell asleep and passed away peacefully.

BIDEN

From page 10

stand to dominate global transportation if we fail to keep up.

These decisions are not harmless. More than 100 million Americans live with air so polluted it can shorten their lives. Delayed pollution reductions mean children with developing lungs and people with asthma will have to wait years longer for air that doesn't compromise their health, and all of us who will be saddled with a more dangerous climate from years of excess emissions.

It's not the first time the Biden administration has backed down from an environmental obligation for what appear to be political reasons. Last summer, for instance, EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan delayed action to strengthen the nation's

Miguel's morphine patch did nothing to alleviate the severe headaches, back pain and electric shocks throughout his body. He died experiencing extreme suffering. I, his mother, felt as if I failed my sacred duty to protect my only son.

As grieving Catholic mothers, we firmly believe this option at the end of life does not take God's will away. God is kind and compassionate, and he does not want his children to suffer.

We are proud to continue our late sons' work. We are grateful that 10 states and the District of Columbia allow terminally ill adults to choose medical aid in dying. More than 70% of Illinois voters support the option, according to a February 2023 survey conducted by Impact Research. We invite you to honor our sons' memory and listen to the majority of Illinois voters by telling your state lawmakers that it is time for them to allow this gentle dying option.

Will you join us?

Nilsa Centeno lives in Cidra, Puerto Rico. Suzy Flack lives in Naperville, Illinois.

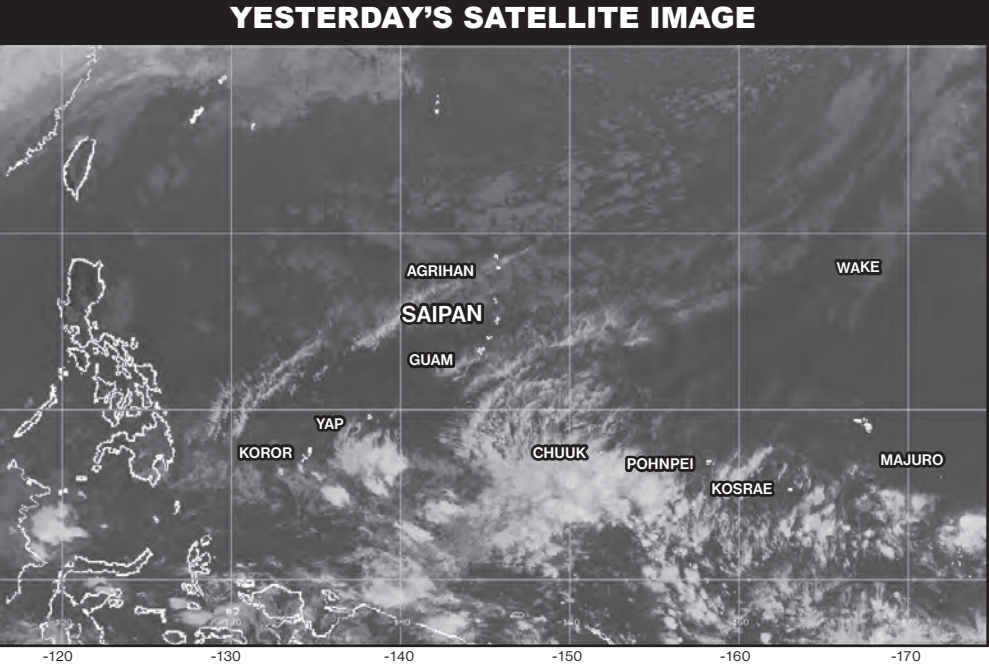
health standards for ozone—the lung-searing gas in smog—until after the 2024 presidential election.

Instead of slowing down the electric vehicle revolution and letting powerful industries and interests win a valuable delay, Biden should stand fast and focus on removing the barriers that are slowing EV adoption. Fixing the horrible state of the nation's vehicle charging network or simplifying the confusing system of tax credits and rebates would make it easier and more affordable for Americans to give up their gas-guzzling cars.

Candidates make all kinds of deals and campaign promises to win support from powerful interests. But if Biden wants to win reelection in November, he needs to deliver results that don't come at the expense of our health and climate.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
Breezy during daytime. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.		Breezy during daytime. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
85	74°	85	74°	85	75°	85	75°	85	75°



PICTURE TIME: 6:57 AM THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows patchy low to mid-level clouds over the Marianas and some higher level clouds were spreading across the region from the south. Surface winds this morning are moderate from the northeast. Tanapag buoy shows combined seas of 7 to 8 ft, from north-northwest and northeast. Weather remains stormy over the far North Pacific, especially east to northeast of Japan.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°	
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 79°	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Cloudy	86° / 82°	
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 80°	
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 82°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:34 AM	6:24 PM
Saturday	6:33 AM	6:24 PM
Sunday	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Monday	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Tuesday	6:31 AM	6:25 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	9:49 AM	10:55 PM
Saturday	-	10:29 AM	11:49 PM
Sunday	-	11:15 AM	-
Monday	12:46 AM	12:06 PM	-
Tuesday	1:45 AM	1:03 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Fair	77° / 61°	
Beijing	Fair	45° / 27°	
Hong Kong	Mist	68° / 62°	
Honolulu	Cloudy	76° / 62°	
London	Mostly Cloudy	52° / 45°	
Los Angeles	Cloudy	64° / 53°	
Manila	Fair	91° / 75°	
Melbourne	Sunny	97° / 73°	
Miami	Mostly Cloudy	80° / 71°	
New York	Rain	58° / 50°	
Osaka	Cloudy	55° / 40°	
Paris	Cloudy	54° / 45°	
Busan	Cloudy	55° / 48°	
Rome	Showers in the Vicinity	65° / 53°	
Salem	Showers	75° / 57°	
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	55° / 46°	
Seoul	Cloudy	50° / 34°	
Tokyo	Cloudy	56° / 40°	
Washington, DC	Fair/Wind	40° / 39°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:50 AM	Low Tide	0.72	
10:38 AM	High Tide	1.63	
5:41 PM	Low Tide	0.21	
-	-	-	

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
				7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.					
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024					
SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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UOG conference speaker to discuss risks and measures in Indo-Pacific missile defense race

The Indo-Pacific region stands on the cusp of a new missile age: Inventories of short- to intermediate-range surface-to-surface missile systems are quickly growing and could heighten the risks of escalation, according to geopolitics expert Ankit Panda.

While military planners and policymakers may view missile defense capabilities as essential to preserving peace and maintaining deterrence, this proliferation could intensify already complex security dilemmas, particularly related to North Korea and the Taiwan Strait, he writes.

Panda, a Stanton senior fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, will discuss the drivers behind these trends and identify possible measures to address the most salient risks in his keynote speech at the 45th College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences' Annual Research Conference at



Panda



Bettis



Kuper



Underwood

UOG. The conference theme is "Pacific Futures: The Stories We Tell."

The keynote speech will be held in the CLASS Lecture Hall starting at 5:30pm on Thursday, March 7, 2024.

Panda will join fellow panelists Dr. Robert Underwood, Guam's former delegate to the U.S. Congress and 10th president of UOG; Dr. Kenneth G. Kuper, associate professor of political science, Chamoru Studies, and Micronesia Studies at UOG; and Leland Bettis, board director, Pacific Center

for Island Security.

"In this era of geopolitical tensions, centered around the competition between the Unit-

ed States and China, focal points are not just in foreign affairs and defense centers in Washington, D.C., and Beijing," said Kuper. "As historian Greg Fry reminds us, 'the claims of empires are often best tested in their remotest outpost.'"

With 27% of the island's land mass currently occupied by the U.S. military, Guam disproportionately bears the weight of U.S. attempts to guarantee security.

Panda is the author of *Kim Jong Un and the Bomb: Sur-*

vival and Deterrence in North Korea and editor-at-large at the *Diplomat*, where he hosts the Asia Geopolitics Podcast, and a contributing editor at *War on the Rocks*.

View the conference keynote speech and panel discussion on the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/uogclass/>.

For more information about the panel and its topic, contact: Kuper via email: kuperk@triton.uog.edu. (PR)

'Sunday with FOA' fundraiser this March 3

Friends of the Arts will have two separate fundraising productions on March 3 simply dubbed "Sunday with FOA" at the new Marianas High School cafeteria.

DYNMX, a new singing group with roots going back to MHS' Rhythm 'n Harmony, will perform beginning 4pm.

They will be followed by two short plays from the young folks of the FOA Youth Theatre. This 4pm set concludes with the sounds of the Saipan Community School Concert Band under the direction of the former FOA music director Ruthie Fruit.

The doors reopen for the second production at 6:15pm and begins with the young voices of the Hopwood Glee Club. This club is under the able direction of Karen Manuel who has mentored numerous young voices that have performed throughout our island. They are followed by the two short plays presented by the Friends of the Arts Youth Theatre. This

second set concludes with another fine musical group, the Marianas High School Concert Band, under the direction of Su Jung Ham.

It should be noted that most of these performers will be off to Guam for the upcoming Tumon Bay Music Festival.

Tickets for each production are sold separately. Student tickets are \$5 and adult tickets are \$10.

Tickets may be purchased at the door or from members of the performing groups.

Reservations may be made by emailing thespians@hotmail.com.

Proceeds from the two productions will be used to bring a return visit from classical pianist Roman Rudnitsky in mid-March and to help support an FOA Youth Theatre Broadway Musical presentation in early May.

Rudnitsky will be seen performing both in concert and at local schools. Times and places to be organized and announced. (PR)

SOUTHERN UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB, INC.

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

A Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Non-Profit Corporation under the name of Southern United Football Club, Inc. is filing this Notice of Dissolution effective February 29, 2024.



JOIN OUR TEAM!

Executive Director Wanted

Are you passionate about preserving and promoting the rich history and culture of the Northern Mariana Islands? Do you possess the leadership skills to steer a dynamic museum towards excellence? If so, we want to hear from you!

Go to www.nmimuseum.org to view Examination Announcement No. 24-030 and submit an Application for Employment by March 11, 2024.

For more information, contact Archie Ajoste, archie.ajoste@gmail.com, or 670-664-2160.



DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES CNMI GOVERNMENT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

ITB NO.: RFP24-BECQ/DEQ-42400031

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2024
TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"TO CONDUCT CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT TRAINING FOR WATER OPERATORS IN THE FIELD OF WATER TREATMENT (LEVELS 1 THROUGH 4) AND WATER DISTRIBUTION (LEVELS 1 THROUGH 4) ON A QUARTERLY BASIS FOR A PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR WITH POSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL THEREAFTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL & COASTAL QUALITY BY MARCH 8, 2024, TO MRS. ZABRINA S. CRUZ VIA EMAIL AT zabrina.shai@becq.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RICHARD V. SALAS
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR,
BECQ

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CNMI GOVERNMENT

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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

PORT OF SAIPAN CPA OFFICE LEAK REPAIRS PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-001-22

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Office Leak Repairs at the Captain George F. Fleming Memorial Building at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SS-001-22.

The project is being funded by the CPA and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri N. Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office, by no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, Wednesday, March 13, 2024**.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: February 14, 2024



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CNMI GOVERNMENT

Man Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TERMINAL ROOF LEAK REPAIRS Project No. CPA-SA-001-24

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the Terminal Roof Leak Repairs Project at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SA-001-24.

The project is being funded by the Commonwealth Ports Authority and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office, by no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, March 8, 2024**.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: February 12, 2024

Hopwood Middle School inducts new NJHS members

Hopwood Middle School inducted 24 new members of the National Junior Honor Society last Feb. 19 at Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

This year's guest speaker was Dr. Roque Indalecio, an active member of the honor society when he was a student. He is the recipient of the prestigious CNMI Teacher of the Year award. Indalecio has a passion for education and aspires to work toward progressive improvement. He is one of the youngest Public School System educators with doctorate degrees in education. He currently teaches at Marianas High School. In his encouraging address, Indalecio told the NJHS inductees to never give up.

"May you embrace each day with a sense of wonder and joy, remembering to pause, reflect, and find beauty in the journey of life. Know your worth and believe in the profound impact you can make in this world. Remember, you will always have someone rooting for you, someone who will forever be proud of all your accomplishments."

In her message to inductees, NJHS Hopwood chapter advisor Esco Anne Ulloa said, "Congratulations to our inductees who have demonstrated a commitment to academic excellence and for consistently striving for knowledge and understanding! Your dedication to scholarship, service, leadership, citizenship, and character serves as an inspiration to their peers and a testament to the importance of lifelong learning."

According to Marilet Tuzon, NJHS president, "Being a part of this society provided me with an opportunity to develop leadership skills, improve my academic performance, and engage in community service projects. Through NJHS, I learned the significance of teamwork, responsibility, and service. The society motivated me to strive for excellence in my academic studies and inspired me to contribute positively to my community. Overall, being a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hopwood Middle School 2024 National Junior Honor Society inductees pose during the induction ceremony held last Feb. 19 at Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

part of NJHS was a great experience that helped me grow as a student both personally and academically."

Irish Ann San Nicolas, Hopwood math teacher and NJHS advisor said, "Our NJHS members have demonstrated a commitment to academic excellence, consistently striving for knowledge and understanding. Their dedication to scholarship serves as an inspiration to their peers and a testament to the importance of lifelong learning. I am immensely proud of the accomplishments of this group of students. They are not just students; they are leaders, scholars, and compassionate individuals who are destined to make a positive impact on the world. As their advisor, I have no doubt that the future holds incredible achievements for each and every one of them."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hopwood's National Junior Honor Society advisors.

Hopwood principal Victorino Borja gave the welcoming remarks. Vice principals Karen Manuel and Ben Seman led the inductees to their pledge membership and gave the closing remarks, respectively. NJHS Faculty Council members and advisors, Hopwood teachers, staff, and parents graced the induction ceremony. This year's

theme is a quote from one of the most prominent leaders in the Civil Rights Movement and political philosopher, Martin Luther King Jr., "Intelligence plus character. That is the true goal of education."

NJHS incumbent officers and members

- Charlotte Amano
- Evan McLaren Carlo P.

Cabrera

- Sandra T. Chargualaf
- Walter Josh N. Clave
- Raven N. Pascual —

historian

- Maria Susana N.

Quidato

- Alexis Danielle M.
- Carlin Mei L. Santos
- Ricky Tang — vice

president

- Marilet Faye M. Tuazon

— president

- Grant Li
- Jazzmine R. Apasan
- Kaedee Celene A.

Valencia — PRO

- Kian Andrei G. Estolas

— treasurer

- Mihhran Ahmed
- Steven Lian
- Victor Joseph Mallari
- Yu Jie Zhang
- Amber Faith Guevarra
- Danielle Kriss M. Joson
- Doreane Viana Dilkau



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dr. Roque Indalecio served as guest speaker of the induction ceremony.

T. Tudela

- Hanna Reign Baltazar
- Hanna Katelyn C.

Bechayda

- Hanna Marie P. Pado-

lina

- Henna Mae C. Valdez
- Jeraleigh Naraja
- John Joseph V. Vergara
- Kadesh Job B. Pelayo
- Louise Miel R. Achas
- Matt Adriel A. Sencio
- Mst Tharatun Tazri
- Nia Isabella Margaret

E. Que

- Precious Chrismel

Galapon

- Rhima Viel G. Alfonso
- Therese Lina Belle DB.

Castillo

- 2024 inductees
- Marq Reinier Hernan-

dez

- Anna Sophia Becina
- John Paul Binghit
- Andrew Jian Xin Yang
- Leila Asher Leightley
- Eidrian Dane Calibo
- Dounnie Valmarie

Santos

- Winnie Lu
- Alexander Joseph

Salundaguit

- Brent Ryle Villanueva
- Yumi Viel Francia
- Maria Venice Enriquez
- RomDon Jacob Bautista
- Samantha Escarcha
- Rhia Mhier Hernandez
- Rayanne Mae Aguilar
- Elyza Mae Brillo
- Ernest Jielyan Dela

Cruz

- Alyssa Borlongan
- Rosemary Isabella

Castro

- Aquinna Dion Santos
- Clark Rey Oropesa
- John Michael Ignacio
- Yong Jun Lin

The NJHS is an international student organization that consists of chapters in middle schools. NJHS chapters are found in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and around the world. NJHS elevates a school's commitment to the values of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. It is estimated that more than one million students participate in NJHS activities worldwide. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hopwood Middle School's National Junior Honor Society officers, members, inductees, and advisors pose with principal Victorino Borja, who gave the welcoming remarks, and vice principals Karen Manuel and Ben Seman.

Business

CK Smokehouse opens CK Chicken & Beer

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

CK Smokehouse may just have stumbled on the holy two-nity of watering holes by opening CK Chicken & Beer last December.

Manager Dae Il Lee said they opened CK Chicken & Beer on Dec. 22, 2023 as an extension of CK Smokehouse but specifically catered to Saipan's local drinking crowd.

"We always had a fried chicken menu at CK Smokehouse and people really loved it. Then we thought why don't we just expand with varieties of fried chicken at this new place since they have a wide variety of fried chicken dishes in Korea," he said through interpreter Jun Hyung Park.

In a way, pairing fried chicken with beer is practically a match made in heaven.

"Chicken always goes best with beer. We said 'why not bring the concept of solely offering chicken and beer here and give more choices and more joy to the customers.' That was the start of CK Chicken & Beer," he said.

Supervisor Andrew Estepa said, for now, they have six varieties of fried chicken but are planning to bring more varieties in the future.

Currently on the menu are Wasabi Chicken, Sweet & Sour Chicken, Premium Onion Chicken, Soy Sauce Chicken, Bul (Fire) Chicken, and Regular Chicken.

Asked what sets their fried chicken apart from other Korean fried chickens in the



MARK RABAGO

CK Chicken & Beer supervisor Andrew Estepa invites everyone to the newest watering hole sensation on Saipan.

market, Lee said they have partnered with one of the best fried chicken sauce makers in Korea, guaranteeing their fried chicken dishes a unique and distinct taste.

Lee also said their Bul (Fire) Chicken has some local elements to it, as they've added a pinch or two of Tinian's world famous *donni sali* to it.

So far so good, as customers have been raving about their unique twist on an old classic from Korea, especially their Regular Chicken and Sweet & Sour Chicken.

One order cost only \$13.95 for the Original Chicken and \$18.95 for the rest. Customers can also mix and match and or-

der half of each kind. All come with a free bowl of steamed rice.

The second part of the holy two-nity, the beer, comes in alcoholic and non-alcoholic kinds, with the former bannered by the light and smooth Asahi draft beer as well as the usual suspects—Budweiser, Budlight, Michelob Ultra, and Corona.

The guilt-free ode to Silenus, the Greek god of beer and drinking, includes Hoegaarden Zero, Budweiser Zero, and Cass Zero.

The rationale for offering non-alcoholic beer was explained by Lee, "Some food goes well with beer and we believe fried chicken always goes well with the taste of beer. But



MARK RABAGO

CK Chicken & Beer is located next to CK Smokehouse in front of the U.S. Post Office in Chalan Kanoa.

some people don't want the alcohol but they want the same taste of beer and of course the chicken. We just want to introduce that (non-alcoholic beer) to Saipan so they can have the option to drink non-alcoholic beer. We believe chicken goes best with any kind of beer, alcoholic or non-alcoholic."

For those unfortunately allergic to chicken, CK Chicken & Beer can offer the menu of CK Smokehouse with crispy pata and steak made from Tinian beef, usually the most sought-after dishes.

CK Chicken & Beer also recently imported an easy cook instant noodles machine for those just can't get enough of ramen and for those who imbibed too much and simply need a hangover cure.

"The economy is down and prices of food are going up but



MARK RABAGO

CK Chicken & Beer's easy cook instant noodles machine is for ramen-lovers of all ages.

the price of our fried chicken is lower than our competitors. We just want to help our community go through this economic crisis better by offering delicious fried chicken that is not hard on their budget," said Lee when asked why open a business during uncertain economic times.

CK Chicken & Beer is located next to CK Smokehouse in front of the U.S. Post Office in Chalan Kanoa. It can accom-

modate as many as 30 dine-in customers and is open from 5:30pm to 11pm everyday.

For more information or to make reservations, call (670) 234-3331 and (670) 234-3330. Chicken & Beer offers delivery between the times of 5pm and 11pm on cash payment basis only. Delivery is free on a purchase of two or more chicken dishes (southern Saipan and Garapan only).

GRMC hosting Shriners Pediatric Clinic until March 7

DEDEDO, Guam—Guam Regional Medical City is hosting the Shriners Hospitals for Children—Honolulu from Wednesday, Feb. 28, through Thursday, March 7, in conjunction with the Department of Public Health & Social Services. This is Shriners' sixth clinic held at GRMC.

During this visit, the Shriners Team is scheduled to see 36-40 established pediatric patients per day with orthopedic conditions, burns, and spinal cord injuries. Additionally, due to the high volume of scheduled patients for the week, referrals for new patients will be placed on a waitlist. No surgeries will take place during this visit.

Pediatric orthopedic surgeon Dr. Craig Ono will lead a team of four, including Vena Joco, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse; Sandy Zukeran

and Eric T., outreach coordinators; and Robin Miyamoto, clinical research coordinator. DPHSS will provide direct support under the leadership of Margarita Gay, RN, administrator for the Bureau of Family

Health and Nursing Services.

Parents or legal guardians of new patients will need to complete an application form, which may be picked up at 155 Hessler Place (former Guam Legislature building) in Hagåtña, Monday-Friday from 8:30am to 11:30am and 1:30pm to 4pm. Applications must include a

copy of the child's birth certificate, parent identification card, and proof of legal guardianship, if applicable.

For more information, contact the DPHSS at (671) 922-2583 or (671) 922-2517. You may also contact Cherisse Santiago at cherisse.santiago@dphss.guam.gov or Nicole Loren at nicole.loren@dphss.guam.gov. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shriners Honolulu Medical Outreach Team and Department of Public Health & Social Services. From left, DPHSS' Nicole Loren, Lea Bolano, and Ester Gutierrez; Genetics Research coordinator Robin Miyamoto; pediatric orthopedic surgeon Dr. Craig Ono; Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Vena Joco; and DPHSS' Diana Santos.

Appellate judge refuses to halt Trump's \$454M fraud penalty while he appeals

NEW YORK (AP)—A New York appellate judge on Wednesday refused to halt collection of Donald Trump's \$454 million civil fraud penalty while he appeals, leaving the former president less than a month to pay the staggering sum or secure a bond covering the full amount he owes.

Judge Anil Singh of the state's mid-level appeals court rejected Trump's offer of a \$100 million bond, though he did give Trump leeway that could help him secure the necessary bond before New York Attorney General Letitia James seeks to enforce the judgment starting March 25.

Singh granted a stay pausing part of Judge Arthur Engoron's Feb. 16 verdict that barred Trump, his company and co-defendants from borrowing

money from New York financial institutions. The Republican presidential front-runner's lawyers had told the appellate court earlier Wednesday that the lending ban had made it impossible for him to secure a bond for the full amount.

Trump's lawyers warned he may need to sell some properties to cover the penalty and would have no way of getting them back if he is successful in his appeal. State lawyers said those disclosures suggested Trump—who has more than a half-billion dollars in pending court debt—was having trouble coming up with enough cash to foot the bill. The penalty is increasing by nearly \$112,000 each day because of interest and will eclipse \$455 million on Saturday.

Nation

Biden 'continues to be fit for duty'



AP

President Joe Biden walks out of the White House in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, to board Marine One for a short trip to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., for his annual physical.

BETHESDA, Md. (AP)—President Joe Biden “continues to be fit for duty,” his doctor wrote Wednesday after conducting an annual physical that is being closely watched as the 81-year-old seeks reelection in November.

Dr. Kevin O’Connor, Biden’s physician, wrote that the president is adjusting well to a new device that helps control his sleep apnea and has experienced some hip discomfort but also works out five times per week.

“President Biden is a healthy, active, robust, 81-year-old male who remains fit to successfully execute the duties of the presidency,” O’Connor said in a six-page memo on the president’s health, following a physical that took Biden to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for more than 2 1/2 hours.

His memo added that Biden

“feels well and this year’s physical identifies no new concerns.”

The oldest president in U.S. history, Biden would be 86 by the end of a second term, should he win one. His latest physical mirrored one he had in February last year when O’Connor described Biden as “healthy, vigorous” and “fit” to handle his White House duties.

Still, voters are approaching this year’s election with misgivings about Biden’s age, having scrutinized his gaffes, his coughing, his slow walking and even a tumble off his bicycle.

After he returned to the White House on Wednesday, Biden attended an event on combating crime and suggested that when it came to his health “everything is squared away” and “there is nothing different than last year.”

He also joked about his age and people thinking “I

look too young.”

Former President Donald Trump, 77, is the favorite to lock up the Republican nomination later this month, which would bring him closer to a November rematch against Biden. Trump was 70 when he took office in 2017, which made him the oldest American president to be inaugurated—until Biden broke his record by being inaugurated at 78 in 2021.

O’Connor’s report said that Biden’s stiff walking was no worse than last year and was the result of arthritic changes in his spine. He said the president also noted “some increased left hip discomfort.” There were no signs of stroke, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s or other similar conditions in what the report called an “extremely detailed neurologic exam.”

Poll: US adults fracture along party lines in support for Ukraine military funding

WASHINGTON (AP)—As Russia makes battlefield advances and Ukrainian soldiers run short on ammunition, U.S. adults have become fractured along party lines in their support for sending military aid to Kyiv, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Democrats are more likely to say the U.S. government is spending “too little” on funding for Ukraine than they were in November, but most Republicans remain convinced it’s “too much.” That divide is reflected in Congress, where the Democratic-held Senate—with help from 22 GOP senators—passed a \$95 billion package of aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan earlier this month. But the bill, which includes roughly \$60

billion in military support for Kyiv, has languished in the Republican-held House as Speaker Mike Johnson has so far refused to bring it up for a vote.

President Joe Biden, along with top Democrats and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, passionately urged the Republican speaker during a White House meeting this week to take up the foreign aid package, but Johnson responded by saying that Congress “must take care of America’s needs first.”

Most Republicans still share Johnson’s view, and their opinions haven’t changed significantly since the fall: 55% say the U.S. is spending too much on Ukraine aid, compared to 59% in November.

Meanwhile, support for increasing Ukraine aid has grown among Democrats. About 4 in

10 Democrats say the U.S. is spending “too little” on aid to Ukraine in the war against Russia, up from 17% in November. The share of Democrats who say the U.S. is spending “too much” or “about the right amount” has also dropped over the same period.

Chloe Henninger, 24, a Democrat from West Hartford, Connecticut, was among those who said the U.S. is spending too little on aid to Ukraine. She said it was important for the U.S. to show commitment to democracies like Ukraine that are under siege.

“From a humanitarian point of view, there were sovereign borders agreed upon internationally. And then an autocratic power went and invaded a sovereign territory. The U.S., as one of the major military forces in the world, sort of has a duty to respond,” Henninger, who works as a cosmetic chemist, said.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

UN: Quarter of Gaza’s population step from famine and aid trucks are looted

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—At least one quarter of Gaza’s population—576,000 people—are one step away from famine and virtually the entire population desperately needs food resulting in some aid trucks being shot at, looted and overwhelmed by hungry people, top U.N. officials said Tuesday. The officials from the U.N. humanitarian office and the U.N.’s food and agriculture organizations painted a dire picture of all 2.3 million people in Gaza facing crisis levels of food insecurity or worse, and civil order breaking down especially in the north where food and other humanitarian supplies are scarce. And as grim as the picture is today, U.N. humanitarian coordinator Ramesh Ramasingham told the U.N. Security Council that “there is every possibility for further deterioration.” He said that in addition to a quarter of Gaza’s population close to famine, 1 in 6 children under the age of two in northern Gaza are suffering from “acute malnutrition and wasting,” where the body becomes emaciated. Carl Skau, deputy executive director of the World Food Program, said that is “the worst level of child malnutrition anywhere in the world.” And he warned that “If nothing changes, a famine is imminent in northern Gaza”—the initial target of Israel’s military offensive following Hamas’ surprise attack in southern Israel on Oct. 7 that killed some 1,200 people and led to about 250 being taken captive. In the latest example of the breakdown of civil order, Skau said WFP resumed deliveries to northern Gaza for the first time in three weeks on Feb. 18, and hoped to send 10 trucks a day for seven days to address immediate food needs and provide some reassurance to people that sufficient food would be arriving.

S. Korean, US troops will begin major exercises next week in response to North Korean threats

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korean and U.S. troops will begin their expanded annual military drills next week in response to North Korea’s evolving nuclear threats, the two countries said Wednesday, a move that will likely enrage North Korea because it views its rivals’ joint training as an invasion rehearsal. In recent months, North Korea has inflamed animosities on the Korean Peninsula with fiery rhetoric and continued missile tests. While it’s unlikely for North Korea to launch full-blown attacks against South Korea and the U.S., observers say the North could still stage limited provocations along the tense border with South Korea. On Wednesday, the South Korea and U.S. militaries jointly announced that the allies will

war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip and as the U.S. and its allies launch airstrikes trying to stop them. The British military’s United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center, which oversees shipping in the Mideast, reported the attack happened about 110 kilometers (70 miles) off the coast of the Houthi-held port city of Hodeida. The rocket exploded several miles off the bow of the vessel, it said. “The crew and vessel are reported to be safe and are proceeding to next port of call,” the UK-MTO said. The private security firm Ambrey reported that the vessel targeted appeared to be a Marshall Islands-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carrier in the area at the time. Another ship, a Panama-flagged, Emirati-owned chemical tanker was nearby as well, Ambrey said. The Associated Press could not immediately identify the vessels involved. The Houthis typically take several hours to claim their assaults and have not yet done so for the assault late Tuesday. Meanwhile, the U.S. military’s Central Command said an American and an allied warship shot down five Houthi bomb-carrying drones in the Red Sea on Tuesday night. The drones originated “from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and (it was) determined they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and to the U.S. Navy and coalition ships in the region,” Central Command said in a statement.

conduct Freedom Shield exercise, a computer-simulated command post training, and a variety of separate field training, from March 4-14. Col. Lee Sung-Jun, a spokesperson for South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that the allies’ drills are designed to bolster their joint capabilities to prevent North Korea from using its nuclear weapons. He said the allies are to carry out 48 field exercises this spring, twice the number conducted last year, and that this year’s drills would involve air assault, live-firing and bombing training. “Our military is ready to punish North Korea immediately, strongly and to the end in the event of its provocation, and we’ll further strengthen our firm readiness through the upcoming drills,” Lee said. Col. Isaac L. Taylor, a spokesperson for the U.S. military, said the allies’ exercises have been defensive in nature and that there is solid evidence that “a high readiness rate” helps ensure deterrence. North Korea didn’t immediately respond to the drills’ announcement.

S. Korea has given doctors till tonight to end a strike, or face prosecution

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea’s government made a last appeal to junior doctors to end a walkout, with hours left to go before the Thursday deadline on its threats to suspend medical licenses and prosecute the strikers. Thousands of medical interns and residents have been on strike for about 10 days to protest the government’s push to boost medical school enrollments. Government officials have warned that strikers would face legal repercussions if they don’t return to their hospitals by Thursday. As of Wednesday night, about 9,076 of the country’s 13,000 medical interns and residents were confirmed to have left their hospitals after submitting resignations, according to the Health Ministry. Observers say many strikers are likely to defy the deadline, continuing the labor boycott for weeks or months. The government is expected to begin formal steps toward punishments on Monday, as Friday is a national holiday. “We’ve said that we won’t hold them responsible for leaving their worksites if they return by today,” Vice Health Minister Park Min-soo told a briefing.

Rocket fire reported off Yemen in Red Sea in a new suspected attack by Houthi rebels

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—A rocket exploded late Tuesday night off the side of a ship traveling through the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen, authorities said, the latest suspected attack to be carried out by Yemen’s Houthi rebels. The attack comes as the Houthis continue a series of assaults at sea over Israel’s

Off The Wall

CHEERS TO BEING CROOKED AGAIN

Quirky English pub demolished after fire to be rebuilt as it was



AP

The burnt out remains of The Crooked House pub near Dudley, England, on July 8, 2023.

LONDON (AP)—The owners of a quirky 18th century British pub unlawfully bulldozed after a mysterious fire last year were ordered on Tuesday by a local council to rebuild it—and to stick to its original, lopsided dimensions.

The watering hole—known as the Crooked House for its leaning walls and tilting foundation—favored by many locals in the village of Himley, central England, was gutted by a fire and subsequently demolished last August.

Its demise saddened many in the village, about 210 kilometers (130 miles) northwest of London, and became the subject of a criminal investigation. Three people were arrested and later released on bail in connection with the blaze but no one was charged.

In a statement, the South Staffordshire Council said it

had “engaged with the owners” and now ordered the pub rebuilt “back to what it was prior to the fire” by February 2027 or face prosecution for failing to comply. The notice was served on owners, Adam and Carly Taylor and the company secretary of ATE Farms, which bought the inn. They have 30 days to appeal the notice.

The fire took place two weeks after the pub was sold by operator Marston’s. Two days later—and before a cause could be determined—the pub was bulldozed without authorization, which raised questions among local residents.

Roger Lees, the leader of the council, praised campaigners whose “aim is to see the Crooked House back to its former glory.” More than 35,000 people joined the ‘Save The Crooked House (Let’s Get It Re-Built)’ Facebook page.

“We have not taken this action lightly, but we believe that it is right to bring the owners, who demolished the building without consent, to account and we are committed to do what we can to get the Crooked House rebuilt,” Lees said.

Andy Street, the mayor of the wider West Midlands region who has supported the pub’s reconstruction, welcomed the decision in a post on X, formerly Twitter. “Fantastic work from South Staffordshire Council,” Street said.

The pub, originally built as a farmhouse in 1765, started sinking on one side as a result of extensive coal mining in the area, which is part of England’s region widely known as the Black Country, a reference to its industrial and mining heyday in the mid-19th century.

‘Totally cold’ is not too cold for winter swimmers competing in a frozen lake

NEWPORT, Vt. (AP)—Plunging into a frozen lake and swimming laps may not be everyone’s good time but for winter swimmers who return year after year to a northern Vermont lake near the Canadian border, there’s nothing better.

The 10th annual Memphremagog Winter Swimming Festival kicked off Friday with the 200-meter (218-yard) freestyle race in a narrow pool cut from the ice. But the festivities started Thursday and on Friday morning some of the 180 participants swam a lap wearing a decorated hat.

“It was amazing. It’s the highlight of my year,” said Andie Nelson, of Arlington,

Virginia, after swimming 25 meters (27 yards) in the hat competition. “It makes me happy.”

She planned to compete in all events over the three days and said it’s more about the people and comradery than the icy water.

Ted Hirsch, 63, of Boston, and Ed Gabriels, 62, of Germantown, New York, have been competing against each other for about seven years. This year, Gabriels beat Hirsch in the 200-meter freestyle.

A group of women from Canton, Ohio, called the Buckeye Bluetits range in age from 40 to about 80 years old and returned for their fourth year.

They swim year-round at Meyers Lake at home but wouldn’t miss the chance to swim in Vermont in what organizers say is some of the coldest winter swimming in the world.

“It’s the vibe. We have so much fun here and we’re amongst friends,” Margaret Gadziec said.

Winter and ice swimming is defined as swimming in water at 41 Fahrenheit (5 Celsius) or below, according to organizers. The International Winter Swimming Association lists nine such events around the world this season on its website, with Memphremagog being the only one in the U.S. Other competitions happened in Sweden, Poland, Switzerland and Belgium with one coming up in March in Estonia.

Science & Technology

Pilots race in jet suits against a backdrop of Dubai skyscrapers



AP

Jet suit pilots race in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Pilots lined up on a runway in Dubai on Wednesday and fired up their seven jet engines with an ear-splitting roar. But they weren’t preparing to fly an airplane—they were the aircraft.

This city-state in the United Arab Emirates, known for being home to the world’s tallest building and other wonders, hosted what it called its first-ever jet suit race. Racers zipped along a route with the skyscrapers of Dubai Marina looming behind them, controlling the jet engines on their hands and their backs.

And if it sounds like Iron Man, the Marvel comic book character made internationally known by actor Robert Downey Jr., the pilots say it is exactly like that.

“The closest analogy would be that dream of fly-

ing ... and then go wherever your mind is taking you,” said Richard Browning, the founder and chief test pilot for Gravity Industries, the firm that put on the race with Dubai. “And yes, the world of Marvel superheroes and DC Comics, they have created that dream book with CGI, and we’ve got the closest I think anybody’s ever got to delivering that for real.”

Gravity previously drew worldwide attention when it equipped one of its jet suits on a U.K. Royal Marine, who landed on a ship at sea several years ago. In the time since, they’ve traveled widely with the suits and pursued other military applications for them before coming up with the idea of a competition with the Dubai Sports Council.

The races on Wednesday saw pilots wear 1,500-horsepower jet suits, more power-

ful than most luxury sports cars and using the same kind of fuel used by Dubai-based long-haul carrier Emirates’ Airbus A380s and Boeing 777 aircraft. Pilots lined up on a runway used at the Dubai Marina by Skydive Dubai, the thrill-seeking firm associated with the sheikhdom’s Crown Prince Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, with some parachutists coming down as they prepared their jet packs.

Then came what pilot Issa Kalfon referred to as “the moment of truth.” The engines roared and pilots jumped and leaned forward. And like a helicopter takes off, so too did the pilots as they sped around obstacles in a water channel near the site. Organizers said they picked the water site to allow for higher speeds and for safety as the pilots skimmed a short distance above the water.

Our ancient animal ancestors had tails. Why don’t we?

WASHINGTON (AP)—Our very ancient animal ancestors had tails. Why don’t we?

Somewhere around 20 million or 25 million years ago, when apes diverged from monkeys, our branch of the tree of life shed its tail. From Darwin’s time, scientists have wondered why—and how—this happened.

Now, researchers have identified at least one of the key genetic tweaks that led to this change.

“We found a single mutation in a very important gene,” said Bo Xia, a geneticist at the Broad Institute and co-author

of a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

The researchers compared the genomes of six species of apes, including humans, and 15 species of monkeys with tails to pinpoint key differences between the groups. Once they identified a significant mutation, they tested their theory by using the gene-editing tool CRISPR to tweak the same spot in mouse embryos. Those mice were born without tails.

Xia cautioned that other genetic changes may also play a role in losing tails.

Another mystery: Did

having no tails actually help these ape ancestors -- and eventually, humans—survive? Or was it just a chance mutation in a population that thrived for other reasons?

“It could be random chance, but it could have brought a big evolutionary advantage,” said Miriam Konkel, an evolutionary geneticist at Clemson University, who was not involved in the study.

As to why having no tails may have helped, there are many tantalizing theories—including some that link being tailless to humans eventually learning to walk upright.

Life & Style

Don Henley wraps up testimony in Eagles lyric sheets case

NEW YORK (AP)—The lyrics to “Hotel California” and other classic Eagles songs should never have ended up at auction, Don Henley told a court Wednesday.

“I always knew those lyrics were my property. I never gifted them or gave them to anybody to keep or sell,” the Eagles co-founder said on the last of three days of testimony at the trial of three collectibles experts charged with a scheme to peddle roughly 100 handwritten pages of the lyrics.

On trial are rare-book dealer Glenn Horowitz and rock memorabilia connoisseurs Craig Inciardi and Edward Kosinski. Prosecutors say the three circulated bogus stories about the documents’ ownership history in order to try to sell them and parry Henley’s demands for them.

Kosinski, Inciardi and Horowitz have pleaded not



Musician Don Henley leaves the courthouse in New York, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024.

guilty to charges that include conspiracy to criminally possess stolen property.

Defense lawyers say the men rightfully owned and were free to sell the documents, which they acquired through a writer who worked on a never-published Eagles biography decades ago.

The lyrics sheets document

the shaping of a roster of 1970s rock hits, many of them from one of the best-selling albums of all time: the Eagles’ “Hotel California.”

The case centers on how the legal-pad pages made their way from Henley’s Southern California barn to the biographer’s home in New York’s Hudson Valley, and then to the

defendants in New York City.

The defense argues that Henley gave the lyrics drafts to the writer, Ed Sanders. Henley says that he invited Sanders to review the pages for re-

search but that the writer was obligated to relinquish them.

In a series of rapid-fire questions, prosecutor Aaron Ginandes asked Henley who owned the papers at every

stage from when he bought the pads at a Los Angeles stationery store to when they cropped up at auctions.

“I did,” Henley answered each time.

Humorously morose comedian Richard Lewis dies at 76

NEW YORK (AP)—Richard Lewis, an acclaimed comedian known for exploring his neuroses in frantic, stream-of-consciousness diatribes while dressed in all-black, leading to his nickname “The Prince of Pain,” has died. He was 76.

Lewis, who revealed he had been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 2023, died at his home in Los Angeles on Tuesday night after suffering a heart attack, according to his publicist Jeff Abraham.

A regular performer in

clubs and on late-night TV for decades, Lewis also played Marty Gold, the romantic co-lead opposite Jamie Lee Curtis, in the ABC series “Anything But Love” and the reliably neurotic Prince John in “Mel Brooks’ Robin Hood: Men In Tights.” He re-introduced himself to a new generation opposite Larry David in HBO’s “Curb Your Enthusiasm,” kvetching regularly.

“Richard and I were born three days apart in the same

hospital and for most of my life he’s been like a brother to me,” David said in a statement. “He had that rare combination of being the funniest person and also the sweetest. But today he made me sob and for that I’ll never forgive him.”

Comedy Central named Lewis one of the top 50 stand-up comedians of all time and he earned a berth in GQ magazine’s list of the “20th Century’s Most Influential Humorists.” He lent his humor for charity causes, including Comic Relief and Comedy Gives Back.



Lewis

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

‘Naked Gun’ reboot set for 2025, with Liam Neeson to star

NEW YORK (AP)—Lt. Frank Drebin is back on the case. Paramount Pictures is moving ahead with a long-gestating remake of “Naked Gun,” the studio announced Wednesday. Liam Neeson will star as the bumbling police detective Debin in the role made famous by Leslie Nielsen. Akiva Schaffer (“Hot Rod,” “Pop Star: Never Stop Stopping”) will direct the film, set for release in July 2025. The script is by Dan Gregor, Doug Man and Schaffer, who collaborated on 2022’s “Chip ‘N

Dale: Rescue Rangers.” The “Naked Gun” films, derived from the TV series “Police Squad!,” were high-water marks for slapstick comedy. They ran over six years: “The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad” (1988), “The Naked Gun 2 1/2: The Smell of Fear” (1991) and “Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult” (1994).

‘Euphoria’ star Hunter Schafer among protesters arrested during Biden’s appearance on ‘Late Night’

NEW YORK (AP)—Actor Hunter

Schafer was among dozens of war protesters arrested at NBC’s headquarters in Manhattan during President Joe Biden’s appearance on “Late Night with Seth Myers” earlier this week, organizers confirmed Wednesday. The 25-year-old “Euphoria” star was part of a group of more than 100 demonstrators who packed the lobby at 30 Rockefeller Plaza on Monday afternoon to call for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, said the group Jewish Voice for Peace. Schafer and other protesters wore black shirts reading, “Ceasefire Now” and “Not in Our Name” while chanting “Let Gaza Live” and other slogans as Biden’s

motorcade pulled into the area, according to videos and photos of the event.

Ryan Gosling, Billie Eilish, Jon Batiste set to perform at the Oscars

The Oscars just got an infusion of Kenergy. Ryan Gosling will sing the pop power ballad “I’m Just Ken” at the show on March 10, the show’s producers announced Wednesday. Others set to perform their nominated original songs include Billie Eilish and Finneas O’Connell, Jon Batiste, Scott George and the Osage Singers and Becky G. Gosling is also nominated for best supporting actor that evening.

While in character as Ken in a promo for the show with Jimmy Kimmel, he shrugged that he’s not going to win. In fairness, even if it was a joke, he might not be wrong: His fellow nominee Robert Downey Jr. has been sweeping the season. “I’m Just Ken,” written by Mark Ronson and Andrew Wyatt, still has a chance, however, even if the other “Barbie” song, Eilish and Finneas’s soulful “What Was I Made For” seems to be the clear awards favorite to date, having already won a Grammy. But the Ken ballad is also the one everyone has wanted to see on the Oscars telecast, which will mark Gosling’s first time performing at the show. (AP)

Husband gives spouse an unthinkable ultimatum

DEAR ABBY: My husband has a poor relationship with our son and his wife. They want nothing to do with him and don’t want him around the grandchildren because of how he acts. My husband tells me I should stick up for him and tell them what they’re doing is wrong, and that he would never do or say anything bad in front of the grands.

My son and his wife have made their decision. If I send them a text or visit them, it causes fights in our house because he is not welcome. Now my husband is demanding that I choose: Stand by him and have nothing to do with the kids, or choose the kids and have nothing more to do with him. How fair is it to have to make a choice like that?

TORN IN FLORIDA

DEAR TORN: Fairness has nothing to do with it. Your husband is trying to blackmail you into running interference for him with your son. It’s time to decide which is more important—having a relationship with your son, his wife and your grandchildren or remaining with your controlling, unpleasant husband. Keep doing what you’re doing and call his bluff, because disengaging from you could be more complicated—and expensive—than your husband realizes.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am writing because my wife has lost in-

terest in her appearance. I love her, but I cannot figure out a way to tell her she has become obese. She seems to think her appearance is just fine.

I know I can’t say anything without her getting extremely upset, so I’m in a quandary about how to get her to understand that obesity is not only a danger to her health but also looks awful. Can you suggest a way to approach a woman without getting in deep trouble with her? I’m sure other men (and women) have this similar situation. Please advise.

WORRIED HUSBAND

DEAR HUSBAND: The message might be less unwelcome if you concentrate solely on the HEALTH aspect of her weight gain. Encourage her to see her doctor, begin exercising (with you, if necessary) and adopt a healthy diet for BOTH of you “because you love her, and want to enjoy many more happy years together.”

■■■

DEAR ABBY: A relative recently moved to my state and wants to get together more than I care to. This person had more than a year to prepare for the move, but didn’t plan ahead for many of the tasks and now is overwhelmed, needy, whiny and complaining constantly.

I’m now being asked for information regarding many of the personal services I use. My relative talks over me and doesn’t listen, so conversation is difficult. Aside from not initiating

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

calls or answering my phone, have you any suggestions about how I can limit my interactions with this person?

KEEPING TO MYSELF

DEAR KEEPING: If your relative has a computer or cellphone, email or text a list of resources they can use to acclimate to the community. (I’m thinking pharmacy, dry cleaners, specialty stores, etc.) And after that, be “busy.” VERY busy.

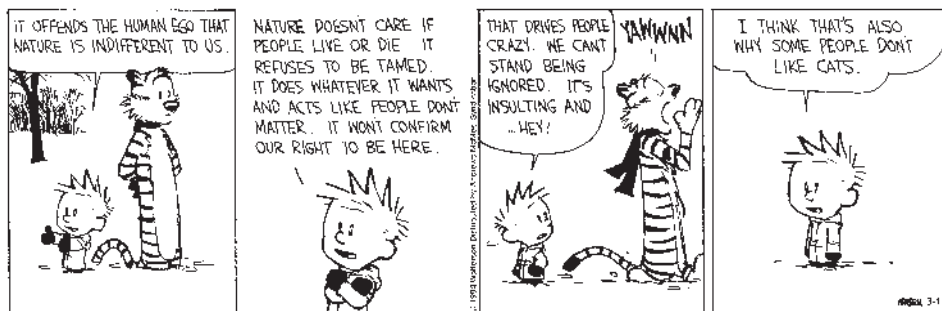
■■■

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order “How to Be Popular.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Roast
4 Indian lentil dish
7 Minty quaff
12 Author Fleming
13 Ab — (from the start)
14 Cosmetics mogul
15 Actress
16 TV sci-fi drama starring Thandiwe Newton
18 Tolkien ogre
19 Raiment
20 Video-streaming brand
22 Madrid Mrs.
23 Baby's call
27 Caustic solution
29 Logic
31 Kagan of the Supreme Court

DOWN

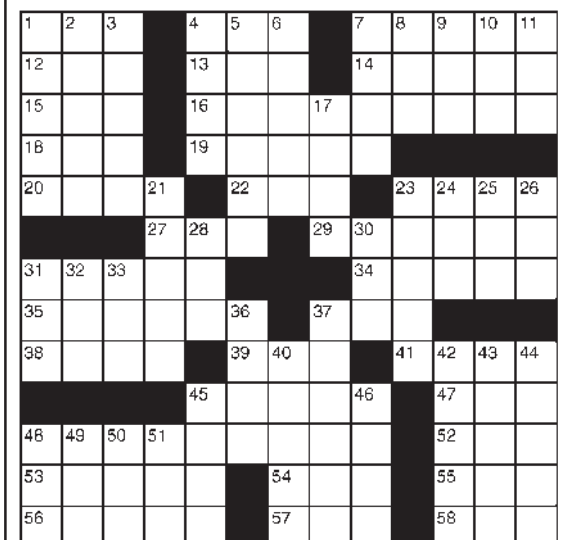
34 Governed
35 White-water vessels
37 Ornate vase
38 Clarified butter
39 Lettuce variety
41 Dull sound of impact
45 "Haystacks" painter
47 Big bird
48 Internationally
52 "There's no — team!"
53 Moral principle
54 Sharing word
55 — Diego

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54 Sharing word
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17 Despot
21 Arm bones
23 Intimidate
24 Visual communication syst.
25 Fawn's mama
26 Moreover
28 Talk and talk
30 Goof up
31 Heart chart (Abbr.)
32 — di-dah
33 Storm center
36 Garbage barge
37 Depleted
40 Leek's kin
42 Robbery
43 Inuit boat
44 "Beats me!"
45 Roman 1601
46 Region (Abbr.)
48 Director Craven
49 Slugger Mel
50 Plato's P
51 Like Abner or Wayne

Solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterdays answer 3-1



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Justin Bieber, 30; Keshia, 37; Lupita Nyong'o, 41; Ron Howard, 70.

Happy Birthday: Set yourself up for success. Put a financial plan in place, and monitor your liabilities versus your assets. A hands-on approach to conducting your daily expenses, routines and lifestyle will give you the power you need and want to reach your target this year. Revisit contracts, adjust agreements and promise only what you know you can deliver. Stabilize your position. Your numbers are 6, 13, 17, 24, 32, 37, 45.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Take it upon yourself to do the legwork. Keeping busy will help you stay out of trouble. Live up to your promises, but don't deny yourself the time you need to soothe your soul. Balance and equality are the paths to personal happiness. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Take a breather. Don't exhaust yourself physically. Accidents happen when you are worn out and overly emotional. Focus on pampering yourself and rethinking your strategy and what's in your best interest. Examine your professional or domestic situation, and prepare to make positive adjustments. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't be fooled by what others say. Get your facts straight before you participate in something that may have consequences. The time spent on personal growth and self-improvement will encourage better decisions and rewards. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Participate in events that can teach you something. A receptive attitude will allow your imagination to morph into some-

thing promising. It's not the cost of things that makes them better; it's the ingenuity and simplicity that makes them great. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't feel you have to make a move or follow in someone else's footsteps. Consider your options and what makes sense, and you'll discover a manageable path. Keep the peace; position yourself better to ensure you get what you want. **

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Ignore outside influences and carry on with your plans. The changes you want to implement will open doors to new beginnings. Attend events or reunions that enable you to address questionable issues. A partnership will improve your chance to achieve your long-term goal. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Physical activity will clear your head. Decisions regarding joint ventures will cost you if you let your emotions call the shots. Spend more time mastering the art of doing things yourself rather than relying on others to prop you up. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You'll face tough choices. Forward-thinking is essential if you want situations to turn favorable. Take the blame for your mistakes and the credit for successes. There is no shame in learning as you go, but there is if you continue to fall short due to waffling. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Distance yourself from pushy, relentless individuals eager to mislead and make you look bad. Trust in yourself and what's tangible. Avoid unfamiliar places and people, or situations that befuddle and leave you feeling vulnerable. Don't broadcast your every move. Aim for secrecy and stability. ****

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Side-step controversy and avoid a precarious position that keeps you from mastering the skills you need to reach your goals. Take a unique approach to how you use your disposable funds to invest in yourself. ****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keeping up will require ingenuity and well-thought-out plans. If you muscle your way forward, you will make mistakes or run into opposition. Patience and moderation will deter unnecessary change that can result in overpaying. Choose simplicity over complexity. **

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't waste time; set your sights on your goal, and refuse to let anyone lure you off track. Show your strength and courage by ignoring temptation and embracing what makes you feel alive. Your happiness lies within. *****

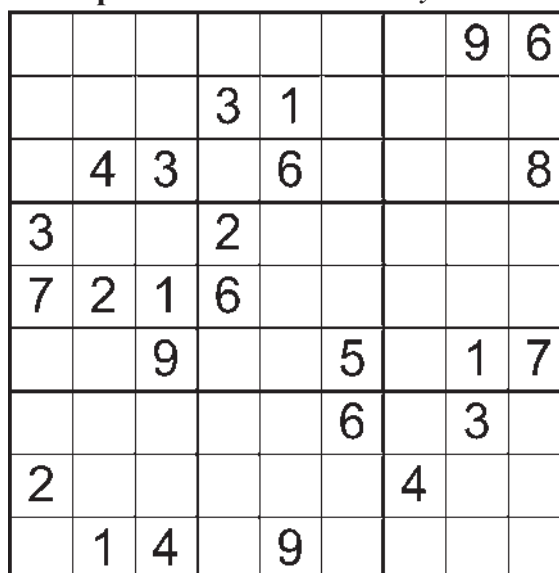
Birthday Baby: You are dedicated, authentic and empathetic. You are amenable and philanthropic.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

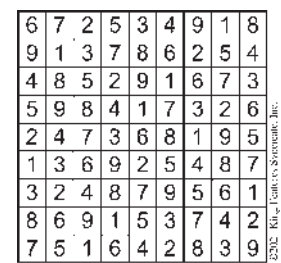


Difficulty: ★★★★★

3/1

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



Difficulty: ★★

2/29

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

NONOGRAMS Solution: 9 letters

I N N O I T C E S Q U A R E S
C L R F U N C T I O N L U E T
E O L E M L E P R C O L G G R
R C G U T P A E A G C N P U A
U R L N S T T Y I I E T E E T
T O N O I T A C O L N O N S E
C S L O E T R P L U M T C S G
I S E L T N I A R B T A I P Y
P W X N U E H O T K L L L T E
S O I E V C G E N E D D I H N
H R P L E R E A S O N I N G I
P D O Z T I L E M D S E N I L
A S A Z R B T R A I N I N G N
R M N U M B E R S O L O C O
G Y T P M E S M A G A Z I N E

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Blank, Brain, Challenge, Clue, Cognition, Colors, Column, Crossword, Empty, Function, Graphs, Grid, Guess, Hidden, Illustrate, Image, Layout, Letter, Lines, Location, Logic, Magazine, Maze, Number, Online, Paint, Pattern, Pencil, Picture, Pixel, Print, Puzzle, Reasoning, Scale, Section, Solve, Squares, Steps, Strategy, Tile, Total, Training
Yesterday's Answer: Exciting
The NEW TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION #1 can be purchased on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367.)

LeBron, Lakers rally with big 4th quarter to stun Clippers, 116-112

LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James scored 19 of his 34 points during a brilliant fourth quarter, leading the Los Angeles Lakers back from a 21-point deficit for a dramatic 116-112 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday night.

Kawhi Leonard missed a 12-footer with five seconds to play, and James threw a long pass to Cam Reddish for a dunk that punctuated a stunning victory for the Lakers in these Los Angeles rivals' final regular-season game as co-tenants of their downtown arena.

The 39-year-old James was the center of it all, hitting five of his season-high seven 3-pointers while outscoring the Clippers by himself in the fourth quarter (19-16). He either scored or assisted on 11 of the Lakers' 13 baskets in the final period.

The Clippers led 98-77 in the opening minute of the fourth quarter, but James led a 29-8 run in just 7:34. The Lakers won three of four over the Clippers this season, winning the season series for the first time since 2011-12.

Davis had 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Lakers, while Russell had 18 and Hachimura added 17.

Leonard scored 26 points



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, left, dunks as Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard, center, and guard Terance Mann defend during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, in Los Angeles.

and James Harden had 23 points and nine assists for the Clippers, who have lost back-to-back games for the first time since Dec. 23. The Clippers played without All-Star Paul George, who missed his second straight game with a sore left knee, and starting center Ivica Zubac, who was ill.

NUGGETS 117, KINGS 96

DENVER (AP)—Jamal Murray scored 32 points, Nikola Jokic had 14 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists in just three quarters for his fourth straight triple-double and Denver beat short-handed Sacramento.

Jokic had his 19th triple-double of the season as Denver avoided losing all four games to Sacramento this

season. Murray made 13 of 16 shots, including 5 of 6 3-point attempts, to help the Nuggets win their fourth straight since the All-Star break.

Kings guard De'Aaron Fox was scratched from the lineup about an hour before tip-off because of a left knee contusion. He went through pregame warmups before being ruled out.

Domantas Sabonis, the NBA triple-double leader with 21, was held to 13 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, while Keegan Murray scored 21 points for Sacramento.

Denver trailed 47-32 early in the second quarter and outscored the Kings 68-22 over the next 18:21 to lead by 32. Jokic completed the 124th triple-double of his career when he fed Kentavious Caldwell-Pope for a corner 3-pointer that made it 100-68 with 1:14 left in the third quarter.

MAVERICKS 136, RAPTORS 125

TORONTO (AP)—Luka Doncic had 30 points, 16 assists and 11 rebounds on his 25th birthday for his 11th triple-double of the season and Dallas beat Toronto.

Kyrie Irving scored 15 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter for Dallas.

Doncic shot 11 for 23, going just 1 of 8 from 3-point range, as Dallas snapped a two-game skid. He went 7 for 9 at the foul line.

Immanuel Quickley scored a season-high 28 points and RJ Barrett had 26 points for Toronto. The Raptors lost for the first time in four games since the All-Star break.

BULLS 132, CAVALIERS 123, OT

CHICAGO (AP)—DeMar DeRozan scored 35 points, Andre Drummond had 26 rebounds and Chicago outlasted

Cleveland in double overtime Wednesday night.

DeRozan scored 16 points in the 10 extra minutes. Nikola Vucevic added 24 points and 13 rebounds and Drummond had 17 points to help the Bulls rebound from a loss to lowly Detroit to beat one of the Eastern Conference's best teams.

The Cavaliers were coming off a wild 121-119 victory over Dallas, with Max Strus hitting a 59-footer as time expired. Evan Mobley led Cleveland with 25 points and 13 rebounds. Darius Garland scored 23 while making 7 of 14 3s. Donovan Mitchell finished with 19 points, but the Cavaliers came up short after winning 12 of 15.

TIMBERWOLVES 110, GRIZZLIES 101

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Anthony Edwards scored 17 of his 34 points in the third quarter, helping Minnesota beat Memphis for the outright Western Conference lead.

Naz Reid provided a spark off the Minnesota bench with 19 points, and Karl-Anthony Towns had 13 points and 11 rebounds. The Timberwolves (42-17) have won three straight and lead Oklahoma City by a half-game in the West.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis with 33 points and 13 rebounds.

PACERS 123, PELICANS 114

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Pascal Siakam had 24 points and 11 rebounds, Tyrese Haliburton added 17 points and 13 assists—four on late consecutive possessions—and Indiana beat New Orleans.

The teams will complete the home-and-home set Friday night in New Orleans.

Brandon Ingram had 30 points and six rebounds for the Pelicans.

Despite suspension, Miami's Bryant can get his championship ring from Nuggets

DENVER (AP)—The NBA will allow suspended Miami Heat center Thomas Bryant to briefly be in Denver's arena Thursday night so he can receive his 2023 championship ring from the Nuggets in a pregame ceremony.

Suspended players are typically not allowed to be present at the arena on game nights. Bryant will be wrapping up a three-game suspension for his involvement in an altercation that happened during a Heat game against New Orleans last week.

But given that the game is Miami's only visit to Denver

this season, the NBA told the Heat that Bryant can be there and receive the ring he earned when he finished the 2022-23 season with the Nuggets—who beat Miami in the NBA Finals. Bryant signed with the Heat as a free agent last summer.

Bryant will have to leave the arena after the ceremony.

Denver handed out its championship rings on Oct. 24, just before playing its first game of the season. A player no longer with the title-winning team routinely get his ring in the first game against the former club. Otto Porter Jr. received his 2022 championship ring from Golden

State when Toronto visited there in early January—a year and a half after Porter was part of the Warriors' most recent title team.

Denver's rings from last season have 16 carats of diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, representing the 16 playoff wins it took to win a championship.

Bryant appeared in 18 regular-season games and one playoff game with the Nuggets last season. He started that season with the Los Angeles Lakers, and was one of the players on the floor when LeBron James broke Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's NBA scoring record on Feb. 7, 2023.

That was Bryant's last game as a Laker. He was traded to Denver two days later in a four-team deal.

Hornets sign free agent forward Pokusevski, former first-round draft pick by the Thunder

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The Charlotte Hornets have signed free agent forward Aleksej Pokusevski, the 17th overall pick in the 2020 NBA draft.

Terms of the deal were not released.

Pokusevski appeared in 150 games with 65 starts in four seasons with the Oklahoma City Thunder, averaging 7.5 points, 4.7 rebounds and 2.0 assists in 20.6 minutes per game. However, his playing time has

dwindled with Pokusevski only playing in 10 games this season for the Thunder, averaging 1.2 points and 1.0 rebounds in 6.0 minutes.

He is the latest OKC player to join the Hornets.

Charlotte also acquired guards Tre Mann and Vasilije Micic and forward Davis Bertans in exchange for Gordon Hayward prior to the NBA trade deadline.

The 22-year-old Pokusevski

played three professional seasons (2017-20) in Greece with Olympiakos, becoming the youngest player in team history to play in the EuroLeague when he played his first game at 17 years, 83 days. Between Olympiakos, Olympiakos B and Olympiakos U18, Pokusevski played in 39 games with 27 starts, tallying 10.2 points, 6.4 rebounds, 2.5 assists, 1.4 steals and 1.8 blocks in 20.6 minutes per contest.

NBA denies Knicks' protest of loss in Houston, saying referee error is not grounds to overturn

NEW YORK (AP)—The NBA has denied the Knicks' protest of their loss in Houston, two days after New York won a game in large part because of a call that was determined to be incorrect.

The Knicks protested their 105-103 loss to the Rockets on Feb. 12, a game that ended with Houston's Aaron Holiday making two free throws after officials called a foul on New York's Jalen Brunson with 0.3 seconds remaining. After the game, referee Ed Malloy said the contact between the players was marginal and no foul should have been called.

However, that is not grounds to overturn the result, the NBA

ruled Wednesday.

"Under the standard for NBA game protests, New York was required to demonstrate that there was a misapplication of the official playing rules, as opposed to an error in judgment by game officials," the league said in a statement. "Because the foul call at issue reflected an error in judgment, New York did not demonstrate a misapplication of the playing rules, and the extraordinary remedy of upholding a game protest was not warranted."

There hasn't been a protest upheld in the NBA since the 2007-08 season, when an error by the Atlanta stat crew led to Miami's Shaquille O'Neal

fouling out of a game when he had only five fouls at the time. The league ordered the final 51.9 seconds of their game to be replayed.

The Knicks escaped with a 113-111 victory over Detroit on Monday after Josh Hart made the go-ahead basket with 2.8 seconds remaining. Officials reviewed tape of the game afterward and determined that New York's Donte DiVincenzo should have been called for a foul on Pistons rookie Ausar Thompson that instead allowed the Knicks to regain possession of the ball, with Detroit coach Monty Williams saying it was "the absolute worst call of the season."

MLB wants to make starting pitching more prominent

» But it's a tough task in today's game



SURPRISE, Ariz. (AP)—

Max Scherzer logged at least 179 innings in 10 of his first 16 years in the majors. And the three-time Cy Young Award winner learned some tough lessons on the road to pitching deep into games.

That's one reason why the Texas Rangers right-hander thinks Major League Baseball needs to look a lot deeper than a roster limit if it wants to return starting pitching to prominence.

"I became a better pitcher once I went through three times in the lineup and was failing on that third time through the lineup," the 39-year-old Scherzer said. "That's every young pitcher's struggle, is learning how to pitch three times through a lineup. ... We're so scared now to let guys fail."

The state of starting pitching has the attention of MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred, who said in October the league is considering lowering the maximum of 13 pitchers per team to 12 possibly as soon as the 2025 season—with the goal of placing a greater emphasis on starting pitchers.

Big league starters averaged 15.4 outs and 85.1 pitches last year, according to Sportradar, and 15.6 outs and 84.9 pitches in 2022. But the numbers were 17.4 and 93.1 as late as 2015, and 17.8 and 98.6 in 2000.

"I grew up a fan of the game, and me and my dad used to pick Astros games based on when Roy Oswalt was pitching,"



Texas Rangers' Max Scherzer flips the ball in the air as he paces the dugout during the seventh inning of a baseball game against the Arizona Diamondbacks Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2023, in Phoenix.

Chicago Cubs right-hander Jameson Taillon said. "We would look at pitching matchups, that's what we would do. Nowadays, I feel like that allure is gone a little bit."

MLB wants to put that allure back in the game, but it's a tricky, multifaceted issue.

Pitching prospects are closely monitored on their way to the majors, and deviating from the organization's plan could put the careers of minor league managers and coaches at risk. There is more arm talent in big league bullpens than ever before, and reams of data that

illustrate the danger of leaving a pitcher in for too long.

"From a fan perspective, yeah, to see a guy in there to go seven, eight innings, I absolutely get it," Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "Doesn't necessarily help you win baseball games, and I'm in the business of winning games."

While a 12-pitcher limit could incentivize teams to let starting pitchers go deeper into games, it would add more stress to bullpens. It also could prompt teams to shuttle their middle relievers

from the majors to the minor leagues even more—regardless of their performance.

The long-term answer most likely lies in the lower levels of the minors and how baseball develops its next generation of starters.

"It starts with training in the minor leagues," Rangers manager Bruce Bochy said. "That's where it all begins. It's hard to do it when guys are coming up. They're not trained to do that. Now you're going to ask them to get you deeper in the games and now you're risking injury. So you got to be

smart about that."

The focus in the minors is more on stuff, Taillon said, and trying "to raise guys' ceiling at a young age."

"You see guys nowadays get called up who've never thrown five innings in their life," he said. "It's crazy."

Pitch counts, especially for baseball's top prospects, prevent pitchers from working deep into games in the minors.

Scherzer, who threw at least 95 pitches in 15 starts last year, thinks more latitude in the minors would help.

"I've been developed to throw, call it 105, 110 pitches

on a five-day rotation," he said. "It's the rest. It's more about the pitch count and then getting the appropriate amount of the rest. I don't understand why we keep cutting that pitch count lower and lower, especially for the guys who are being developed."

Scherzer called a 12-pitcher roster limit "a terrible idea," but he agreed that it would take some sort of action to reverse the current trend with starting pitching.

"We need to incentivize keeping the starter in the game longer," he said. "We're going to have to come up with rules to do this. It's not going to self-correct."

Once pitchers make it to the majors, they are often pulled before the lineup turns over a third time because of statistics that show hitters typically have more success in their third plate appearance against the same pitcher.

It could be an ace right-hander rolling along with a low pitch count—with no sign of trouble—and the manager makes the move because it's easier to address why he took him out than why he left him in for too long. That's an attitude that would be difficult for Major League Baseball to take out of the game.

"Trusting what you're seeing, trusting your eyes and knowing when those times are to be able to let them go, I think you might start to see that come back a little bit more," Cubs pitching coach Tommy Hottovy said. "There's no refuting the numbers. It's just like being able to recognize when it's time to let them let them go."

Dodgers will pay Minnesota \$6M-\$8M as part of the Margot trade with the Twins

FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP)—The Los Angeles Dodgers will pay Minnesota \$6 million to \$8 million as part of the trade that moved Manuel Margot to the Twins.

The cash reduces the cost of the outfielder to the Twins to \$4 million.

Minnesota acquired Margot and minor league shortstop Rayne Doncon on Monday for minor league shortstop Noah Miller.

Margot has a \$10 million

salary this season as part of a \$19 million, two-year contract he signed with the Tampa Bay Rays, a deal that includes a \$12 million mutual option for 2025 with a \$2 million buyout. As part of the December trade that sent Margot and pitcher Tyler Glasnow to the Dodgers, Tampa Bay agreed to pay the Dodgers \$2 million on Aug. 2 and an additional \$2 million on Dec. 1, 2026, if Margot's option is not exercised.

As part of Monday's trade,

the Dodgers agreed to pay the Twins \$1 million on the 15th of each month from April through September this year. If Margot's option is not exercised, Los Angeles would pay Minnesota \$1 million each on Dec. 15, 2024, and Nov. 15, 2026.

At the time Monday's trade was announced, Los Angeles finalized a \$4 million, one-year contract to keep Kiké Hernández. That made the trade and the free agent addition payroll neutral.

The 29-year-old Margot hit .264 with a .686 OPS in 99 games for the Rays last season while playing center field and right field. He also has played left field.

Margot made his major league debut with San Diego in 2016 and was the primary center fielder for the Padres from 2017-19, before being traded to the Rays. In 788 career games, he is a .255 hitter with a .694 OPS, 52 home runs and 91 stolen bases.

Ohtani says he is married and that his new bride is Japanese

Baseball star Shohei Ohtani announced on his Instagram account that he is married. The two-way player joined the Los Angeles Dodgers in December on a record-breaking contract worth \$700 million over 10 years.

He wrote on Instagram in Japanese: "The season is approaching but I would like to announce to everyone that I

have gotten married."

He said his new wife is a "Japanese woman" although he did not identify her. He said he would reveal more in an interview on March 1.

He asked that that media refrain from "conducting unauthorized interviews." But of course the news will make even more headlines than his baseball stardom.

Ohtani is training in Arizona for the upcoming season, preparing for the Dodgers to open the MLB season in Seoul, South Korea, on March 20-21 in a two-game series against the San Diego Padres.

Ohtani is Japan's biggest celebrity, and there has always been curiosity around his personal life, which he

has always kept very private. His focus, and his image, has always been 100%-baseball focused—free of scandals or tabloid news.

The post on Instagram also included a photo of his dog "Dekopin," which is also called "Decoy."

He wrote: "We hope the two of us—and one animal—will work together." (AP)

Cubs finalize Bellinger contract after trading minor leaguer to White Sox

MESA, Ariz. (AP)—The Chicago Cubs finalized Cody Bellinger's \$80 million, three-year contract on Tuesday after they traded left-hander Bailey Horn to the White Sox, clearing a spot on their 40-man roster.

Bellinger, who turns 29 in July, will make \$27.5 million this year. He has a \$27.5 million player option for 2025 with a \$2.5 million buyout that would be payable Dec. 31, 2024. There is a \$25 million player option for 2026 with a \$5 million buyout that would be payable in equal installments on Jan. 15, 2026, and Jan. 15, 2027. He also gets a hotel suite on road trips.

Bellinger hit a career-best .307 with 26 homers, 97 RBIs and 20 steals in 130 games with the Cubs last season.

The Cubs sent Horn to the White Sox for minor league right-hander Matt Thompson.

The 26-year-old Horn, a fifth-

round pick by the White Sox in the 2020 amateur draft, went 7-3 with a 4.21 ERA in 45 appearances over two minor league stops last year. He finished the season with Triple-A Iowa.

"Any time you can pick up a left-handed pitcher with some ability, you try to do it," White Sox manager Pedro Grifol said. "I mean he just adds value to the organization. It adds competition. Left-handed pitchers are hard to find."

To make room for Horn on their 40-man roster, the White Sox placed right-hander Jesse Scholtens on the 60-day injured list with a torn ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow.

Thompson, a second-round selection in the 2019 amateur draft, played for Double-A Birmingham last year. The Houston native went 6-15 with a 4.85 ERA in 27 starts.

Cousins, Jones head a free agents list filled with star-quality players

By ROB MAADDI

AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



Need a Pro Bowl quarterback, an All-Pro defensive lineman or a future Hall of Fame wide receiver?

NFL teams could find one of these guys and plenty more star-quality players when the free agency period begins on March 13. Kirk Cousins, Chris Jones and Mike Evans are among the best players who will be available on the open market unless their teams use a franchise tag by March 5. The Bengals already used it on wideout Tee Higgins.

They'll be joined by running backs Derrick Henry, Saquon Barkley and Josh Jacobs, edge rushers Josh Allen, Brian Burns and Danielle Hunter and several other talented players at various positions, including wide receiver, safety and linebacker.

Defensive line is the deepest position while offensive tackle has the fewest starting-caliber players on the list.

Here are the top 25 players set to become free agents:

1. KIRK COUSINS, QUARTERBACK, MINNESOTA VIKINGS: The four-time Pro Bowl QB was having an excellent season before he tore an Achilles tendon in October. He has said he wants to stay in Minnesota and coach Kevin O'Connell reiterated the team feels the same way.

"I believe Kirk wants to be a Viking, and we're going to work to try and make that the outcome," O'Connell



Minnesota Vikings' Kirk Cousins throws during the first half of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions Sunday, Dec. 11, 2022, in Detroit.

said Tuesday.

2. CHRIS JONES, DEFENSIVE TACKLE, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS: The two-time All-Pro is a game-changer, as evidenced in Kansas City's win over San Francisco in the Super Bowl. It would cost the Chiefs about \$32 million to use the franchise tag on Jones again this season, a decision they haven't yet made.

"That's certainly a guy we want back and love," general manager Brett Veach said. "We want to see him finish his career here in Kansas City."

3. JOSH ALLEN, EDGE RUSHER, JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS: Allen had a career-high 17 1/2 sacks

in his contract year. Allen is Jacksonville's best defensive player. They can't afford to let him leave but many teams will be interested.

4. CHRISTIAN WILKINS, DEFENSIVE TACKLE, MIAMI DOLPHINS: Already one of the best run defenders in the NFL, Wilkins had a career-best nine sacks to increase his value on the open market.

5. JUSTIN MADUBUIKE, DEFENSIVE TACKLE, BALTIMORE RAVENS: Madubuike had more sacks last season (13) than his first three seasons combined. His breakout season will land him a significant deal, and perhaps a franchise tag.

6. BRIAN BURNS, EDGE RUSHER, CAROLINA PANTHERS: He's been the best defensive player on a terrible team and would seem eager to get a fresh start elsewhere but the Panthers aren't going to let him get away easily.

GM Dan Morgan already said the team would likely use the \$24 million franchise tag on Burns.

"We would definitely use it if we had to use it," Morgan said. "We love Brian."

7. ANTOINE WINFIELD JR., SAFETY, TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS: The versatile Winfield had an All-Pro season, helping the Buccaneers win a third straight division

title and advance to the second round of the playoffs. The Buccaneers are aiming to sign Winfield to a long-term deal instead of giving him the franchise tag at \$17.1 million.

8. LJARIUS SNEED, CORNERBACK, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS: A tough, physical cornerback, Sneed didn't allow a touchdown and was an instrumental part of Steve Spagnuolo's championship defense. The Chiefs could use the franchise tag, which is about \$19 million for cornerbacks.

9. MIKE EVANS, WIDE RECEIVER, TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS: He's the only player to start his career with 10 seasons with 1,000 yards receiving. Evans turns 31 in August but hasn't shown any signs of slowing down. The Buccaneers want to keep him but he'd be a great fit for several teams.

10. DANIELLE HUNTER, EDGE RUSHER, MINNESOTA VIKINGS: The four-time Pro Bowl pick had a career-best 16 1/2 sacks, his fifth season reaching double digits in eight years.

11. JAYLON JOHNSON, CORNERBACK, CHICAGO BEARS: He's physical, consistent and has the ability to be a lockdown player.

12. MICHAEL PITTMAN, WIDE RECEIVER, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS: Pittman had a career-best 109 catches and 1,152 yards receiving. He'll be 27 in October and is a candidate for a franchise tag.

13. SAQUON BARKLEY, RUNNING BACK, NEW YORK GIANTS: The two-time Pro Bowl pick could get the franchise tag for the second straight season. If not, Barkley should get plenty of interest in free agency despite the league's overall devaluing of the running back position.

14. TYRON SMITH, LEFT TACKLE, DALLAS COWBOYS: After being limited to just 17 games over the previous three seasons, Smith started 13 and returned to his dominant form.

15. BAKER MAYFIELD, QUARTERBACK, TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS: After bouncing around in 2022, Mayfield signed a one-year deal to replace Tom Brady in Tampa Bay and had the best season of his career. He wants to remain with the Buccaneers and they want to keep him.

16. DERRICK HENRY, RUNNING BACK, TEN-

NESSEE TITANS: The 30-year-old four-time Pro Bowl pick has plenty of wear and tear but he just started 17 games, ran for 1,167 yards and scored 12 touchdowns. He's had five 1,000-yard seasons in the last six years, including 2,027 yards in 2020, and he's scored double-digit TDs six straight years. He's a perfect fit on a contender.

17. LEONARD WILLIAMS, DEFENSIVE TACKLE, SEATTLE SEAHAWKS: A tough run defender, Williams was a force rushing the passer last year. He cost Seattle two draft picks in a trade so the Seahawks will make a strong push to keep him.

18. KENDALL FULLER, CORNERBACK, WASHINGTON COMMANDERS: He's a versatile defensive back with ability to play outside, in the slot or at safety.

19. JOSH JACOBS, RUNNING BACK, LAS VEGAS RAIDERS: Struggled to follow up an All-Pro 2022 season but finished strong.

20. KYLE DUGGER, SAFETY, NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS: Excels against the run but needs more consistency in pass coverage.

21. MIKE ONWENU, RIGHT TACKLE, NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS: He has versatility to play guard and be a bookend tackle.

22. CALVIN RIDLEY, WIDE RECEIVER, JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS: Put up solid numbers—76-1,016-8—in his first season back from a suspension and would be an excellent fit on a team that already has a star No. 1 receiver.

23. STEPHON GILMORE, CORNERBACK, DALLAS COWBOYS: The 2019 NFL Defensive Player of the Year has played for four teams in the past four seasons but still is among the top guys at his position.

24. MARQUISE BROWN, WIDE RECEIVER, ARIZONA CARDINALS: Still waiting for that breakout year after his best season with Baltimore in 2021. Has game-changing deep speed that will interest many teams.

25. BRYCE HUFF, EDGE RUSHER, NEW YORK JETS: Huff goes from undrafted to a big payday after recording a career-best 10 sacks last season. He still needs to develop as a run defender to be more than a pass-rush specialist.

UNDEFEATED

From page 24

board after TMS allowed Lailley Teregeyo to score on a defensive mishap to make it 1-3 in the sixth inning.

TMS were then gunned down in the sixth inning and

sat on their two-run lead, but they held on after HMS failed to produce in their last at-bat.

In their game last Saturday, the Tatagas claimed their fourth win when they beat Mount Carmel School, 3-0.

Ogumoro was the star of this game as she hit an

inside-the-park homerun to left field in the second inning. Teammates Remyann Jose and Delos Santos then scored the last two runs.

The Knights had opportunities to score throughout the game but left runners on base due to strikeouts or groundouts.

In other results last Monday, Dandan Middle School won a thrilling game over FMS, 13-12, and Chacha Ocean View Middle School slipped past MCS, 6-5. Last Saturday, DMS beat SCS-GCA-SIS, 15-11, and HMS edged COVMS, 8-2.

CNMI

From page 24

CNMI lost to Kyrgyzstan, 0-2, in their penultimate tie.

Yu lost to Roman Kim, 0-6, 1-6, and Lam was derailed by Atai Aseinov, 4-6, 1-6. Both matches lasted only 1 hour and 5 minutes. Lam and Wessel didn't play the doubles anymore.

CNMI then lost to Maldives in their last tie last Feb. 24. Wessel was bumped off by Dauod Shaheb, 4-6, 1-6, in 1 hour and 23 minutes.

The CNMI won the reverse singles when Lam won via walkover against Mohammad Nooh Nazh.

They, however, didn't capitalize on the break as Lam and Wessel dropped a 2-6,

6-2, 5-10 decision against Shaheb and Mohamed Kaisaan Izzath Rasheed. They finished in 20th place.

Lam said it felt amazing to compete and win against the best players from the other countries in the Junior Davis Cup.

"I was lucky and grateful to have such an amazing coach in Colin Ramsey and teammates June and Nason. It was more meaningful and memorable to participate the CNMI's first Junior Davis Cup with them. Definitely I had a wonderful and invaluable experience. The biggest lesson I learned in Sri Lanka is that anything is possible," he said.

Wessel said they all felt relieved after beating Macau be-

cause they were a tough match-up and have more experience on clay court than them.

"So far, the experience in Sri Lanka has been great. I've experienced hardcourt for my whole tennis career and now I'm finally trying a new court. It's been rough losing our pool and losing a close game to decide our placing but it's okay because we're facing players with more experience than us in clay court and their country selected them out of their whole tennis population. These players we've played are ranked worldwide in the juniors and it's of course expected that they would outplay us. We showed that we have determination and we don't give up and that even though we lose we're not going

have a loser's mindset. We just come back stronger," he said.

Wessel said the biggest takeaway from his Sri Lanka trip is to not be distracted by your surroundings.

Yu was overjoyed following their breakthrough win against Macau.

"We felt happy because of it because it was our first win and I think I did my best in that match," he said.

As for what he learned in the Junior Davis Cup, Yu said it would be to be more consistent.

"I think the biggest lesson that I learned is to be aggressive and be consistent more. I think that it is really hard because they're bigger countries and many courts and people that play tennis," he said.

ZARINAE

From page 24

The 26-year-old ran in the 100m event in the 2023 World Athletics Championship in Budapest, Hungary where she clocked in at 13.04

seconds, nearly beating her PR of 12.98 seconds.

The 2024 World Athletics Indoor Championships will be the 19th edition of the international indoor track and field competition, organized by the World Athletics.

Manta Rays still on top as high school va'a races near finals

By JENISHA DUBRALL
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CORRESPONDENT



The end of the Public School System's Interscholastic Outrigger Races 2023-2024 will soon come to a close with the championship races this Saturday, March 2, in the waters off Kilili Beach.

The championships will give each team the chance to redeem themselves and secure a winning title since the races will now offer double points. Normal high school va'a races offer 5 points for those who place first; 3 points for second; and 1 point for third. As the races enter the final phase, first place will now get 10 points; second place will obtain 6 points; and third place will have 2 points.

Saipan Southern High School outstandingly remains on top for every single race division, including boys, girls, and mixed. All Manta Ray crews are currently in first place, with their boys crew securing 45 points, their girls crew with 41, and their mixed crew with 29.

Marianas High School and



JENISHA DUBRALL
The Lady Ayuyus approach their turn during the Interscholastic Outrigger Races 2023-2024 races in the waters off Kilili Beach.

Kagman High School are not too far behind and will now have the chance to steal the trophy that SSHS could potentially claim. KHS' boys crew is currently in second place

with 19 points, and MHS right behind them, in third with 16 points.

The Lady Dolphins are currently in second place with 29 points, and the Lady

Ayuyus are in third place with 10 points.

As for the mixed crew, the Dolphins are just 3 points behind the Manta Rays with 26 points, and the Ayuyus are in third place with 16 points.

Lady Dolphins stoker Eva

Weaver says that MHS has been training really hard this season. As it is Weaver's last high school va'a season, she hopes for a win in the girls 1,000m race, and all mixed crew races.

"The end goal for my girls'

team is to reclaim our title as the high school champions by keeping our name on the plaque, and trying out absolute best in all divisions," said Weaver.

Kagman High School steersman Vinnie Sablan said, "In preparation for our final race, it is really all about that rise and grind. It has been a constant cycle of refining our skills, strategizing, and putting in all the work we can to ensure that we're able to give it our all this Saturday. Got to radiate that A-Y-U-Y-U energy!"

Saipan Southern High School's steersman and stoker Phillip Aldan said, "Every team has worked very hard within the past few weeks, and we wish the best for all schools this Saturday. On behalf of the seniors at SSHS, since this is going to be our very last race, we hope that more paddlers would come out within the coming years to experience the sport as well as join the different club teams outside of the high school division."

Races will start shortly after the opening ceremony at 7:30am. Come and support the youth athletes this Saturday at Kilili Beach as they paddle their hearts out in efforts to claim their titles as champions.

Stage is set for HS badminton playoffs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The playoffs stage is set for the NMBA-PSS Co-ed High School Interscholastic Badminton League 2023-2024.

Marianas High School 1, Agape Christian School 2, ACS 1, Saipan Southern High School 1, Kagman High School 1, and Grace Christian Academy 1 are the last teams standing as they wrap up the season and are vying at a shot for the title.

Last Saturday, SSHS 1 routed ACS 2, 4-1, after they won the men's doubles, women's singles, women's doubles, and mixed doubles events. SSHS 1

next faced off against MHS 1. MHS 1 then defeated them in a close 3-2 matchup to advance to the semis. MHS 1 won the men's doubles, men's singles, and women's doubles events.

KHS 1 beat GCA 1, 3-2, to advance against ACS 1, but fell to them in similar fashion, 3-2. ACS notched wins in the women's doubles, women's singles, and men's doubles events.

Today, MHS 1 will face off against ACS 1; then it's GCA 1 vs. SSHS 1; and ACS 2 vs. KHS 1.

Winners will advance to the final matchups on Saturday, March 2. The semis are scheduled to start at 8:30am, followed by the championship

round at 10:15am. The awards ceremony is set for 1pm.

MHS 1 of Bracket 1 is atop the leaderboard with 20 points, followed by Bracket 2's ACS 1 at 16 points. Bracket 2's SSHS 1 and Bracket 3's KHS 1 are tied with 15 points; and ACS 2 and GCA 1 are at 14 points apiece.

MHS 1 consists of Abigael Robles, Ruth Bautista, Prapti Mondal, Vianca Mangulabnan, Brandon Manacop, Dave Odicta, Sernantie Jimenez, Paulo Quidato, and Marlon Bautista.

The league wrapped up its round-robin matches last Feb. 24.

Last season's champions were the old MHS 1 team that defeated their sister team MHS 2.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas High School badminton players get ready to serve during a round-robin matchup in the NMBA-PSS Co-ed High School Interscholastic Badminton League 2023-2024 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Bolley Ballerz still undefeated after Round 6



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Spicey Locals and Border Control duke it out in Round 6 of the 2024 Rocball Tournament at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The game of the week in Round 6 of the 2024 Rocball Tournament at the Marianas High School Gymnasium was between Bolley Ballerz and Topshakaz.

The Bolley Ballerz won the first set, 25-13, but Topshakaz returned the favor in the second set, 24-17.

After two sets of play the Bolley Ballerz had 42 points and Topshakaz had 37 points. But in Rocball a team cannot win a game in a losing set even if their total points scored is more than their opponent's.

This game was forced into a 5-point overtime set where a team could win a

set without the serve or by scoring a goal before.

Topshakaz served the ball first in the overtime set because Bolley Ballerz served the ball to start the game. The Bolley Ballerz scored a point off Topshakaz's serve and scored a goal on their first serve to win the game. The Bolley Ballerz's overtime win made them the only undefeated team for the season.

In other games, Nesiab Power defeated the Aces, 32-27; Baddie-Z beat Quest, 46-25; and Chagii Fahn got the better of Rizzlers, 39-32.

The Heavy Hitters after

six rounds of play are Jerome Manzon of Baddie-Z with six 3-point goals, Trey Igisomar of Baddie-Z with eight 2-point backcourt scoring plays as his team's goalie, and Miguel Castro of the Rizzlers and Yeshqiah Coleman of Topshalaz each have scored 10 2-point aces.

In the team standings, Bolley Ballerz sports an immaculate 6-0 record, followed by Nesian Power, Topshakaz, and Spicey Locals at 4-1 apiece. Quest and Baddie-Z are tied at 3-3, while Border Control and Aces are at 2-4. Chagii Fahn has won a game out of five tries, while Rizzlers is still looking for its first win after six games. (PR)





LeBron, Lakers rally with big 4th quarter to stun Clippers, 116-112.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Manta Rays still on top as high school va'a races near finals.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Zarinae to represent NMI in Scotland

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

The CNMI's elite sprinter Zarinae Sapong is in Glasgow, Scotland for the 2024 World Athletics Indoor Championships that will be held today, Friday, March 1, until Sunday, March 3.

Sapong is running in the fastest and shortest event—the 60m dash on Saturday, March 2.

Northern Marianas Athletics development manager and coach Elias Rangamar said Sapong's preparation focused on strength training, which incorporated power development and dynamic exercises.

Rangamar said the goal is to break NMI national records or set a personal best. "With formidable competitors on the global stage, our

goal is modest: break our national record or achieve a personal best in the event. This serves as valuable preparation for the upcoming Micro Games, where Zarinae holds the title of reigning 200m gold medalist," said Rangamar.

Sapong decided to skip the 2023 Pacific Games because she had participated in two consecutive competitions—the Oceania Cup last June and the 2023 World Athletics Championships last August.

See ZARINAE on Page 22



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI sprinter Zarinae Sapong poses for a photo during the 2023 World Athletics Championship in Budapest, Hungary last August. She is currently in Glasgow, Scotland to race in the 60m dash in the 2024 World Athletics Indoor Championships.

Undefeated TMS leads girls softball



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tanapag Middle School Tatagas girls softball team poses for a group photo with their coaches after their win against Mount Carmel School last Saturday in the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 at the Dandan Softball Field.

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

Tanapag Middle School Tatagas boast the only undefeated record in the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024.

They bagged their fifth straight win after they defeated Hopwood Middle School Hilitais, 3-1, last Monday at the Dandan Softball Field.

Kayshlie Aguon and Faith Ngriraked got on base from walks in the second inning after a quiet first, and it paid

off later when they rounded the bases to get two on the board for TMS. Jonielle Pua cleared the bases after an extended single landed her in third base.

TMS pitcher Bethany Delos Santos proceeded to quickly strike out the side in the third inning to keep the 2-0 lead. The Tatagas' Risa Sablan then added another run in the fifth inning after the Hilitais defense couldn't handle the ball.

The game wasn't over yet and HMS finally got on the



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CNMI beats Macau; finishes 20th place

By **MARK RABAGO**
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EDITOR



The CNMI finally won a tie in the Junior Davis Cup after downing Macau, 1-2, last Feb. 22 at the Sri Lanka Tennis Association court in Colombo.

June Yu did a superb job subbing for an ailing La Hunn Lam as he took the mantle of

the CNMI's No. 1 seed and proceeded beat Cheng U. Chao, 6-3, 6-4, in 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Nason Wessel then dropped a 2-6, 4-6 match against Si Long Ho, in 1 hour and 16 minutes.

Yu had a second tour of duty with Wessel in the rubber doubles and went on to defeat Chao and Rongshen Xu, 7-6 (5), 2-6, 10-7 in 1 hour 45 minutes and made history for notching the Commonwealth's first win in its

Junior Davis Cup debut.

Ramsay said despite losing Lam in the first singles and Yu also being under the weather, his wards admirably soldiered on against Macau.

"June was feeling sick in the morning so we knew he shouldn't be getting into long exchanges at the baseline. In the singles, he played super aggressive, dictating the points and never letting the opponent get comfortable. It worked well for

him. Nason employed a similar strategy. His raw power stunned the opponent in the first set, but the opponent adjusted quickly and took over the match. In my opinion, the doubles should not have been that close. The games where the boys were dynamic and explosive at the net were taken easily, but that did not happen every game. They did well to hold their resolve and reset after dropping the second set and pulled out a big win for us," he said.

The next day last Feb. 23, the

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

June Yu and Nason Wessel, left, prior to their doubles tie against Macau in the Junior Davis Cup in Colombo, Sri Lanka last Feb. 22.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nason Wessel, left, gets ready to challenge Si Long Ho of Macau in the Junior Davis Cup in Colombo, Sri Lanka last Feb. 22.